THE

RAMAYANA

OF

VALMIKI

Translated into English.

VOL. II.

AYODHYAKANDA

PART I.



SRIRANGAM:
SRI VANI VILAS PRESS.
1918.

To

His Highness the Maharaja

SRI KRISHNARAJA WADIYAR BAHADUR G.C.S.I.

Maharaja of Mysore

Whom His Holiness the Late Jagadguru

of Sringeri appropriately styled

" Dharma Mulam"

" The Source of Virtue"

This Translation of the story of Sri Rama

"The Embodiment of Virtue"

is with kind permission most respectfully

Dedicated

by

T. K. BALASUBRAHMANYA AIYAR

as an humble token of

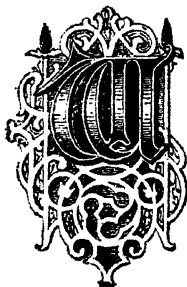
High Esteem.



THE

RAMAYANA.

AYODHYAKANDA.



HEN the noble Bharata proceeded to the house of his maternal uncle, he fondly took with him Satrughna the repressor of passions. Entertained with love and honor he dwelt there for a time. He was fondled by his uncle Asvapati with the love of a son. Though both of them lived there at ease with everything to please, the heroic brothers failed not to remember the aged king Dasaratha and the effulgent king also remembered his

two sons far away from home—dear Bharata and Satrughna, each a match for Varuna or a peer of Indra. All the four bulls among men were alike dear to him just like the four hands issuing out of his own body. Yet amongst them all, the highly energetic Rama was the father's darling. He was possessed of all the best virtues like lord Svayambhu among the creation. He was indeed the eternal Vishnu born in the world of men at the request of the gods who wished for the destruction of the haughty Ravana. With that son of noble splendour Kausalya shone bright just like Aditi with the foremost of celestials, the weilder of the thunderbolt. He was beautiful and strong, free from envy, peerless in this world and blessed with all his father's virtues With placid soul he always spoke softly and even taunts did not provoke a harsh reply. He was pleased with even a single act of obligation and did not remember even hundreds of injuries on account of self-control. In the intervals of martial exercises he always discoursed with the good and the virtuous and the aged people. He was intelligent and sweet-tongued. He always

spoke first and spoke what was dear. He was strong but did not give place to pride of strength. He never spoke falsehood, was learned and he respected the elders. He was beloved of the people and himself loved his subjects. He was tender, with anger subdued and revered the Brahmins. He was kind to all creatures, knew dharma, always ruled his passions and was ever pure. With intelligence befitting his race he was proud of his kshatriya duties and considered heaven as the result of highly glorious deeds. He never engaged himself in inauspicious deeds nor did he relish improper talk and in speech and in quick reply he was the equal of Vachaspati. Free from ailments, young and eloquent, possessing lovely form and cognizant of time and place he was the one good person ever created in this world. Endowed with excellent virtues, this prince appeared to be, as it were, the outward roaming life of his subjects. In art and science duly trained, the elder brother of Bharata maintained well his student vow. He duly learned the Vedas with their *angas* and surpassed his father in the handling of weapons and *astras*. Of exalted birth, saintly

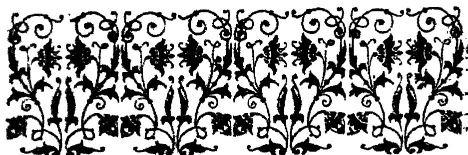
and noble, truthful and just, trained by elderly twice-born men who were cognizant of *dharma* and *artha*, he knew full well the claims and bounds of duty, gain and pleasure. Of keen memory and ready tact, he was broad-minded, being well versed in social usages and customs. He was reserved, with features never disclosing his inner purpose. He was resourceful and neither his pleasure nor his anger went for nought. He knew the times to give and hold. Firm in his faith and of steadfast will, he sought no wrong and he spoke no ill. Neither idle nor careless he knew his failings as well as those of others. Learned in the Sastras and grateful, he knew the hearts of others. He discriminately showed favour or disfavour as befitted the occasion. He knew to appreciate the virtuous as also to chastise the evil-doers. He knew the means of collecting money and with keen eye could guide the expenses. He had attained proficiency in all the Sastras as also in the miscellaneous works.* He sought pleasure after earning *artha* and *dharma* and was never idle. He knew the various heads on which wealth was to be spent in the

matter of entertaining and patronising art. He was skilful in mounting and taming elephants and horses. He was the foremost of those versed in the art of the bow and was acknowledged among men as an *atiratha.* Skilled to attack and to deal the blow, he was accomplished in marshalling his forces. He was incapable of being depressed in fight even by the infuriated gods and asuras. He was not given to carping, had subdued his anger and was never elated or malicious. He did not disregard any creature nor was he a slave of the times. Endowed with such superior qualities the prince was beloved of his subjects as well as of the three worlds. In forgiveness he resembled the earth, in intelligence he resembled Brihaspati and in valour he resembled the lord of Sachi. Endowed with such virtues acceptable to the people as well as pleasing to his father, Rama shone like the Sun bright with his rays and the Earth desired for her lord this Rama who possessed such excellent character and such irrepressible prowess and who resembled the Lokapala. Finding his son crowned with so many incomparable qualities the King

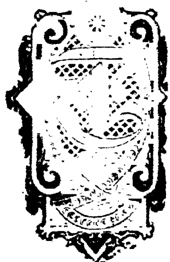
Dasaratha, the subduer of his foes, thought within himself. The old monarch hoary with age reflected thus—'How can Rama become King while I live' and this supreme desire rolled in his heart.—'When shall I behold my beloved son installed in the Kingdom. Surely he wishes always for the prosperity of the people and is kind to all creatures. He is dearer to the people than myself just like the rain clouds. He resembles Yama and Indra in prowess and Brihaspati in intelligence, in endurance he resembles the mountain and excels me in all virtues. How can I in this old age see my son lording the whole of this earth and then reach heaven.' Beholding his son endowed with all such numerous sterling and immeasurable virtues rare among other kings and praised of all the world the great King took counsel with his ministers and resolved to make him the Yuvaraja. The intelligent king read aright the fearful signs in the earth and sky as also the decrepitude in his body. He understood well how dear to all the people was the noble Rama whose countenance resembled the full-moon and whose rays drove away all his

grief. Therefore the righteous monarch with a view to encompass the prosperity of himself and his subjects and influenced by his love expedited his councillors on the approach of the hour. From town and country far and near he summoned people, prince and peer. To each he gave a neat abode and honored all. Then, attired in his royal robes he viewed them like Prajapati looking on all the creatures. But on account of haste that lord of men did not invite either the king of the Kekayas or Janaka, concluding that a little while after they would receive the glad tidings. When the king, the repressor of hostile forces, was seated on his throne, then honored by the people all the rulers thronged into the hall. Facing the monarch those kings sat in their places in different sets of rows as assigned by the monarch. Surrounded by those lords of high renown and by the throngs from hamlet and from town the monarch appeared in regal pride like the thousand-eyed lord Indra surrounded by the Gods.





CANTO II.



HE lord of Earth then bowed to the full assembly and proclaimed aloud in sweet and rapturous tones and in a resonant voice resembling the heavenly drum or the thundercloud. The king addressed the assembled lords right royally in significant tones, mellifluous and peerless.—"It is known to you all how this excellent kingdom of mine was ruled by my fore-fathers with paternal care. I am now eager to bring prosperity to the whole of this deserving earth. Following the footsteps of my ancestors I have, to the best of my power, protected the people with fond care that never slept. Toiling thus for all my peoples'

weal beneath the shade of the white umbrella my body has become old and decrepit. Thousands of years have passed over me and having lived for a good old age I crave rest for the shattered body of mine. Feeble and worn as I am, I can scarce bear the heavy burden of this world with befitting royal dignity, the burden that is impossible to be borne by those who have not controlled the senses. I therefore long to rest after installing Rama for the good of the subjects, if my suggestion is approved by these excellent twice-born men assembled around me here. For my eldest son truly follows me in all the virtues. Rama the conqueror of hostile cities resembles Purandara in prowess. Him, fair as the moon when close to the star Pushya, the foremost of those that maintain righteousness, him, the prince of men, I fain would instal on the throne as heir-apparent. That auspicious elder brother of Lakshmana will surely make a worthy lord for you. Ah, the terrible world itself would be well ruled by such a king as he. I shall immediately bring this world to this blissful state and having consigned my precious charge to my son, I

shall feel relieved of my cares. If this carefully matured proposal of mine which I have devised to be meet recommends itself to you I request you to give your approval to it and to suggest how I should do it. If on the other hand this suggestion is considered as my pet hobby devise some other means of welfare, for different is the thought of the dispassionate and by discussion it becomes more efficacious." When the king spoke thus the assembled princes joyously acclaimed the monarch just like peacocks rejoicing at the sight of the mass of clouds that shower down rain. Murmurs of joy from all around shook the strong palace with the sound. Then when the gathered assemblage had learned the views of him who discerned between *dharma* and *artha*, peasants and townsmen priests and chiefs all met in consultation and agreed with one accord among themselves and gave answer to the old king Dasaratha—"Oh king, we know you are old. Several thousands of years have rolled over you. We pray you to instal prince Rama as the heir-apparent to the throne. We wish to behold

the strong and gallant warrior prince of the Raghus, Rama, riding on a mighty elephant screened by the state umbrella." Hearing these words of theirs the king as if not knowing their hearts' true wish spoke again with a view to learn aright.—"The moment you heard my words you are eager to hail Rama as your lord. This, Oh kings, raises my doubts. Do you therefore speak out your minds truly. While I am righteously governing the earth why do you wish to see my son as the heir-apparent." Then all the people, peasants and townsmen, made reply to that noble king.—"Numerous, Oh monarch, are the splendid qualities that exist in thy son. Do thou hear us now recite the godlike virtues of the illustrious and intelligent Rama, virtues that produce in all minds joy and delight. Endued with divine virtues and the peer of Indra, the truly valorous Rama excels, Oh lord of the Earth even all the monarchs of the Ikshvaku line. Rama is the one excellent person in the whole world, ever devoted to truth and duty. Verily from Rama has proceeded *dharma* along with prosperity. In pleasing his subjects he re-

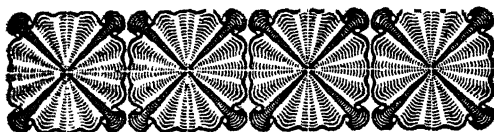
sembles the moon, in his forbearing qualities he resembles the Earth, in intelligence he is equal to Brihaspati and in prowess he resembles truly the lord of Sachi himself. Knowing his duty he is ever truthful. With a lovely character he is not carping. He is forgiving and soothing, lovely and grateful and self-controlled. He is both soft and firm, ever polite and unenvious. He speaks dear to all creatures and speaks the truth. Raghava always attends upon elderly and well-learned Brahmins and by these means his matchless fame and bright glory are ever on the increase here. He is skilled in the use of all weapons whether they belong to the devas or asuras or mortals. He is accomplished in all sciences and arts and has duly mastered the Vedas with all its branches. The elder brother of Bharata is equally renowned in this world in the art of music. He is of excellent parentage, pious, noble and highly intelligent and has been trained by excellent twice-born men who were cognizant of *dharma* and *artha*. Whenever he goes with Lakshmana whether against a town or village or city of the foes he does not return

without conquering them. Returning homewards from the battle either on the elephant or the car he ever greets the townsmen and enquires of their welfare as though they were his own relations. He asks how each son and each servant thrives and how fare the peoples' offerings and wives. He asks for everything in due order like a father enquiring of his own children. That foremost of men, Rama, always talks to us thus.—'Do your disciples serve you well? Are they protected in their duties?' If the people are afflicted with grief his heart is swift to sympathise and on festive occasions he shares the joy like a father. He is truthful and is a powerful bowman. He reveres the elders and has subdued his senses. He speaks with a smile on his lips and is bent on dharma on any account. He firmly establishes prosperity and does not even relish the talk of quarrel. He is an adept in skilful reasoning just like the lord of speech. With graceful eyebrows and coppery eyes he resembles the very lord Vishnu himself. Rama is beloved of the whole world on account of his strength and prowess and daring. He is intent on pro-

tecting the people and is never swayed by passion. He is capable of ruling even all the three worlds. What need be said about this earth? Neither his anger nor his pleasure ever goes in vain. As a rule he gets enraged and slays those fit to be slain and bestows gifts on those with whom he is pleased. Rama shines bright with his qualities of forbearance and endearment which makes all people delight in him just like the Sun with his rays. Such a truthful and valorous Rama endowed with all these qualities and resembling the protector of the world is the lord desired by the Earth. High is the fate, Oh king, that gave thee Rama as thy son. You are fortunate in being blessed with that virtuous son like Kasyapa the son of Maricha. Among the devas, asuras and men, among the gandharvas and uragas, in all the town as well as the countryside one general prayer escends for him. Each man, rural as well as urban, prays with sincere heart for Rama's strong health and length of days. The tender girl and the aged dame pray eagerly both morning and evening for the welfare of the Self-knowing Rama. All of them bow to

all the gods for the illustrious Rama. Do thou, Oh king, gracefully comply with the peoples' longing cry and let us see on the throne by thy side the lotous-tinted Rama the subduer of all foes. Oh thou bestower of boons, it behoves you for the sake of our well-being to speedily instal with a delighted mind thy god-like son Rama, who seeks the good of all, as the heir-apparent.





CANTO III.



THE king acknowledged the salutations made all around with joined palms uplifted and addressed them these gracious words. "Great joy and mighty fame are mine because you wish to behold my dear first-born son installed as heir-apparent. Having greeted them thus the king in their hearing spoke to Vasishtha and Vamadeva and other Brahmins that stood near.—"It is pure and lovely Chitra now when flowers are sweet on every bough. Let all preparations be made for the installation of Rama as heir-apparent." When the king ceased, the people's rapture burst out in loud

acclaim and joyful shout and when the tumults slowly subsided, the king addressed these words to Vasishtha, the best of sages. "It behoves you, Oh lord, to order with watchful heed for everything that will be necessary for the approaching installation of Rama." Vasishtha, the best of the twice-born, heard the words of the lord of the Earth and gladly commanded the bands of servitors who waited earnestly with folded hands in their master's presence. 'You had better collect together by tomorrow's dawn gold, gems, offerings, all kinds of herbs, white flowers, fried rice and honey and clarified butter in separate vessels, newgarments, a car and all weapons. The four-fold forces and an elephant with auspicious marks, a pair of white chowries, a banner and a white umbrella; hundred golden vases shining bright like fire, a bull with gilded horns and a complete tiger-skin. All these and others that may be required for the installation, you had better collect and bring before morning to the sacrificial hall of the palace. Decorate each palace door and each city gate with sandals and garlands and the highly fragrant *dhupa.*

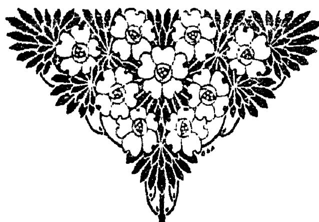
Let excellent food mixed with curd and milk be given to-morrow morning to hundreds of thousands of Brahmins to their entire satisfaction. Let the best of the Brahmins be entertained with ghee, curd and fried rice and plenty of *dakshinas*. Soon as the son rises to-morrow morning let the *Svastivachana* be repeated. Let the Brahmins be invited and seats provided for them. Let the banners be unfurled and the royal roads watered. Let all the dancers and harlots adorn themselves well and remain in the second ring of the royal palace. Let all those that are fit to be garlanded in the temples and altars be separately worshipped with food and other edibles and *dakshinas*. Let warriors brightly clad in warlike armour and with long swords girt round their thighs march to the monarch's splendid court.' Having issued these orders the twice-born pair did what remained to be done and then hastened to the King and informed the lord of the world that their task was duly completed. Then the king said to the wise Sumantra—' Do you bring here speedily the virtuous Rama'. Saying 'so be-

it' Sumantra in accordanee with the king's commands fetched there in the car Rama, the foremost of car-warriors. Then all the kings that were assembled there from the East and West and South and North, the learned mlechhas as well as others who inhabit the woods and the mountains showed honor to the King just as the gods to Indra. Stationed in his palace, in the midst of those princes like Vasava in the midst of the Maruts, the royal saint Dasaratha witnessed the approach of his son in the car, his exceedingly beloved son Rama, who resembled the king of the Gandharavas, who was renowned in valour, who was long-armed and powerful, who strode like a wild elephant, who was as fair in face as the moon, who captivated the eyes and the hearts of people by his lovely form and noble qualities and who pleased the subjects just like a shower of rain pleases those that are oppressed with the heat of the summer. The monarch beheld him approaching, with a never-satiating look. Sumantra helped Rama to get down from the excellent car and followed him with folded hands as

he approached his father. That best of men ascended the steps of the palace that resembled the peak of Kailasa mountain along with the charioteer in order to see the king. Approaching his father with bowed head and folded hands, Rama prostrated at his father's feet and announced his name. Beholding Rama by his side in humble attitude and with folded hands king Dasaratha drew him near by his clasped hands and embraced his beloved son. Then the king signed him to a glorious throne, gem-decked and golden, near his own. Then Rama, the best of Raghu's line, made the fair seat shine with lustre just like the pure Sun at dawn illumines by his rays the Mount Meru. That assemblage itself shone bright with glory on account of his illustrious presence just like the cloudless autumnal sky crested with stars and planets in the presence of the Moon. Seeing his beloved son the king became overjoyed. He beheld as it were himself well-decked reflected in a clear mirror. That king, the best of those possessing sons, then addressed his son thus with a smile just like Kasyapa addressing the lord

of the gods.—"Oh Rama, you are born as the worthy son of my worthy eldest wife. You excel in all virtues and you are my beloved son. For, by your virtuous qualities you have pleased these subjects. Therefore, during the auspicious conjunction of the star Pushya you shall be installed as the heir-apparent. By nature and inclination you are both modest and excellent. Though your gifts need no counsel, my love suggests these friendly words. Practising still greater humility do you constantly restrain your senses. Keep far away the evils that spring from love and anger. Pursue your noble course alike in secret as in open view. Strain every nerve to gain the love of ministers and subjects. Storing the arsenals and the treasury with arms and gold, he who sees his thriving people satisfied and rules the earth accordingly, in him do friends rejoice just like the celestials on attaining the nectar. Therefore, Oh son, maintain your course refraining yourself from all ill." Hearing these words the friends of Rama, eager to do him good, ran in all haste to Kausalya's abode and told her the tidings and that

excellent of dames, Kausalya, gave gold and cows and numerous gems as presents to the bearers of the joyful tidings. Then Rama paid due reverence to his father the king, mounted his chariot and drove to his splendid dwelling honored all round by a large concourse of people. The people also on hearing the words of the king were wild with joy as though each has obtained his desired gift. Bowing to the king they went to their homes and there with happy hearts prayed to all the gods.





CANTO IV.



N the departure of the people, the king took, counsel with his ministers and firm in his will, he made the following resolution. To-morrow itself is the Pushya and to-morrow shall my son, the lotus-eyed Rama be installed as heir-apparent. The king Dasaratha then entered the inner apartments and commanded the charioteer to fetch again Rama there. In obedience to those words the charioteer went quick to Rama's abode to fetch him again. Informed by the gate-keepers of his arrival again Rama was anxious with doubt and fear. He commanded the charioteer to be led in instantly and addressed him thus—

"Tell me the cause without omitting anything of your coming here again." The envoy replied—"The king desires to see you. Hearing this message it is for you to decide whether to go or not." When Rama heard these words of the charioteer he made haste to go to the royal palace and to see the lord of men again. When he learned of Rama's approach, king Dasaratha bade him enter his apartments eager to communicate to him something exceedingly agreeable. The illustrious Rama also, as he was entering the abode of his father, saw him from a distance and folded his hands in salutation immediately. The monarch raised him as he was bowing and embraced him. Then he pointed him to a lovely seat and spoke thus—"Oh Rama, I am old and long-lived. All the desirable enjoyments of life have been enjoyed by me. I have performed likewise hundreds of sacrifices with plenty of food and *dakshinas*. I have got a son in you after my own heart and incomparable in this world. Oh best of men, I have freely given, sacrificed and also studied. Oh hero, all desires and pleasures have been enjoyed by me. I am free

from debts due to the *devas*, *rishis*, *pitris*, Brahmins and likewise myself. Nothing more remains to be done by me except your installation. Therefore it behoves you to act up to what I say now. This day all the subjects have expressed their desire to see you as their sovereign. Therefore I shall instal you, Oh son, as heir-apparent. Further, I have now had dreadful and inauspicious visions in my dreams. Meteors with dreadful sounds shoot wildly downward to the ground. The astrologers also inform me that the cruel planets the Sun, Mars and Rahu are led against my star. When portents dire as these appear generally the monarch's death or terrible misfortune is near. Hence while my senses are yet spared, you had better be anointed as king, for indeed men's minds are fickle. Today the Moon has approached the star Punarvasu prior to Pushya and the astrologers say that to-morrow is the conjunction of the star Pushya with the Moon. During the constellation of Pushya you should be installed. My mind counsels, as it were, haste. Oh repressor of foes, I shall instal you to-morrow as the Yuvaraja. Therefore,

from this moment spend the night, along with your wife, with senses controlled and lying on a bed of holy grass. Let your trusted friends carefully watch you all round to-day, for indeed numerous obstacles crop up for affairs like this. While Bharata is absent from the city I think it is opportune that you should be installed. It may be that your brother Bharata has stood dear to the counsels of the good and faithful to you with tender trust, with good senses, pure and just. Still I know too well human minds will undergo sudden changes and by their constant deeds alone the virtue of the good is shown." Thus addressed Rama was given leave with the words.—"Now Rama go. To-morrow is fixed for the installation." Rama then bowed to his father and went to his abode. Reaching his dwelling he immediately came out and sought his mother's mansion in the interest of the installation desired by the king. There he found his mother in the temple, clad in silk, adoring the gods and silently praying for his welfare. There had come already Sumitra and Lakshmana and the beloved Sita on hearing of the

welcome news of Rama's installation. At that moment, hearing of the installation of her son as the Yuvaraja during the Pushya, Kausalya stood still with closed eyes along with Sumitra, Sita and Lakshmana meditating on lord Janardana through *pranayama.* Rama drew near her as she was thus praying, bowed to her and spoke these words thereby enhancing the joy of that pure soul —" Oh mother, my father has decreed to entrust the people's care to me. To-morrow is to be the installation. Such is father's command. Sita should fast along with me this night. For my father has told me so and the *ritviks* and priests have also concurred. Whatsoever vows you may deem necessary to be done on the eve of my installation, do you sweet mother, cause them to be done for me and for Sita." When Kausalya heard this long desired glad news she spoke to Rama with tears and joy choking her utterence. " My darling Rama, may you live long. May your enemies be destroyed. Coupled with this lustre you may rejoice the hearts of my relations as well as those of Sumitra. The stars were very auspicious, Oh son, when

you were born to me. Hence only, by your virtues you have gratified your father Dasaratha. My vows to the lotus-eyed supreme Lord have not been in vain, for the royal fortune of the Ikshvaku race shall, Oh son, rest upon you." Thus addressed by his mother Rama gazed on his brother who sat reverently with folded hands and spoke to him with a smile as it were—"Oh Lakshmana, you shall join with me in ruling this Earth. You are my second Self and accordingly this fortune has reached you as well. Oh son of Sumitra, do you enjoy every desirable thing as well as the fruits of regal power. My life as well as the kingdom are sweet to me only for your sake." Having spoken thus to Lakshmana Rama bowed to both his mothers and taking leave of them along with Sita went to his own abode.



CANTO V.



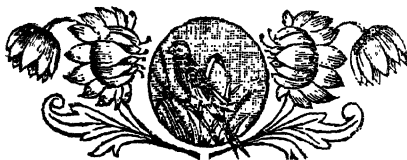
FTER instructing Rama about the installation that was to take place on the morrow the king called the priest Vasishṭha and told him thus —"Now go thou, rich in penance and ordain for Rama and his wife the vow and the fast so that fame and glory and joy may please his reign." The best of those who knew the Vedas replied to the king "so be it" and the lord Vasishṭha went personally to the abode of Rama. He who was conversant with the mantras and who was well established in the practice of vows mounted the excellent Brahma car and hied to Rama's palace to guide his fast in accordance with the sacred rules. Reaching the palace of Rama which showed like a

cloud pale-tinted, that foremost of ascetics passed three courts in his car itself. Then Rama heard of the arrival of the Sage and with all haste and eagerness he came out of his palace with a view to honor the Saint who was worthy of honor. He hastened to the side of the car and personally lent his hand to aid the Sage's descent. Finding Rama humble and dear the Priest addressed him thus, gratifying and delighting him with words that were pleasant—"Oh Rama, your father is pleased with thee and you shall obtain the status of Yuvarja; You had better fast this day along with Sita. For indeed in the morning your father Dasaratha the monarch shall with great affection instal you as Yuvaraja just as Nahusha did Yayati.'' Having spoken thus, the Sage who knew mantras caused Rama to fast along with Sita and to faithfully observe the vows. Then having been duly worshipped by Rama, the spiritual priest of the monarch took leave of Kakutstha and went away from Rama's residence. Rama also spent some time in ease with his friends in pleasant conversation and at last after giving leave to all of them he

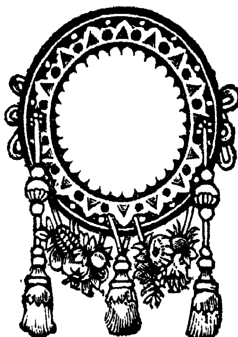
entered his apartments. At that time Rama's house was filled with joyous men and women just like a lake containing blossomed lotuses crowded with maddened birds.

Forth from the house of Rama that strove with the kings in splendour Vasishtha drove and observed all the streets filled with people. On all sides the royal roads of Ayodhya were studded with groups of eager men full of joy. The tumult of joy that arose in the high-roads in consequence of the concourse of noise was like the roaring of the ocean. The roads were watered, swept and cleaned and decked with flowers and green garlands. All Ayodhya shone arrayed with playing banners on the roofs. In the city of Ayodhya all men, women and children expecting with eager eyes the rise of the Sun, stood longing for the herald ray of Rama's consecration, anxious to witness in Ayodhya the august festival which brightened the people and enhanced their joys. The Priest advancing slowly through the mighty crowd which he cleft in two in that royal road approached the monarch's palace. He ascended the palace which was high in the air like a white

cloud peak and drew near to the lord of men just as Brihaspati approaching Sakra. Seeing him approach, the king left off his royal seat and questioned him, to which Vasishtha replied that his task was duly done. Then all the courtiers who sat there along with the king followed the king in rising up and honoring Vasishtha. Permitted by his spiritual preceptor the king dismissed the assembled courtiers and entered his inner apartments just as a royal lion seeks his rocky cave. Even as the moon illumines the firmament studded with numerous stars, the handsome king graced by his entry the mansion that looked splendid like Indra's abode and that was fully thronged with females richly dressed.



CANTO VI.



N the departure of the Priest, Rama duly bathed and with a collected mind began to adore Narayana in company with his wife having extensive eyes. Then lifting up the vessel of clarified butter on his head, he, in accordance with the rules, offered oblations in the blazing fire on behalf of that mighty deity. Then he partook of the remnant of the offering and prayed for his own welfare. Meditating on the god Narayana, the son of the best of men with still lips and tranquil mind reclined with his wife Vaidehi in the temple of Vishnu on a bed of holy *kusa* grass. Rama woke up when one watch remained yet for the night to close and caused his residence te be fully

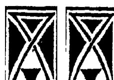
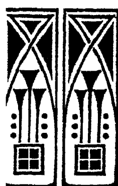
decorated. He heard the bards, panegyrists and heralds raise auspicious strains of joy and praise and in the course of his morning devotions he performed *japa* with a restrained mind and with bowed head he praised the destroyer of Madhu. Himself clad in pure silk dress he caused the Brahmins to repeat the *Svastivachana.* The deep and sweet voices of the Brahmins resounded through the crowded street and filled Ayodhya which was already echoing with the blares of drums. All the inhabitants of Ayodhya hearing that Raghava had fasted with Vaidehi rejoiced exceedingly. Then the inhabitants of the town hearing of the installation of Rama and seeing the approach of dawn began to adorn the city.

"In all the temples bright and fair
As white clouds towering in the air,
In streets and where the crossways met
Where holy altars had been set,
In open squares and in sacred shade
Where merchant's shop, their wealth displayed,
On all the mansions of the great

And householders of wealth and state,
Wherever the people loved to meet
Wherever a tree adorned the street,
Gay banners floated to the wind
And ribands round the staves were twined."

Then rang clear the voices of singers and dancers as they sang, charming the mind and ear. The people talked in whispers stories in praise of Rama. The time of the installation of Rama having arrived, all those in the crossways and houses, even children who played in groups in front of their houses, conversed with each other about Rama's installation. On the occasion of Rama's investiture the citizens adorned the streets with flowers and made them fragrant with incense and thus caused the royal roads shine bright. Fearing the approach of darkness they erected in the roadside all round lamp-posts to illumine the city. Having thus adorned the city, the citizens eagerly awaited Rama's installation in the gadi of Yuvaraja and assembled in groups in crossways and halls and praised the monarch in the course of their conversation. "Ah, noble is this King, the joy of the race of Ikshvakus, for,

knowing himself aged he desires the installation of Rama in the kingdom. We are all blessed since Rama is to be our king and protector for a long time, Rama the knower of the good and the bad. No arrogance will sway Rama; he is learned, just, beautiful and affectionate to his brothers. He loves us just as he loves his brothers. May the just and sinless Dasaratha live long. For it is through his grace that we are to behold Rama anointed as king." Such were the words spoken by the townsmen and heard by the gathering countryfolk who assembled from all directions on receipt of the joyful tidings. They came from all directions to the town eager to see the installation of Rama and these villagers from the countryside filled to the full Rama's city. As the vast concourse strayed here and there, there arose a tumult long and loud just like the roar of the heaving ocean during the full-moon. Then that city resembling the regions of Indra was tumultuous with the noise of the assembled villagers eager to behold, like the ocean with its waters agitated by the flood-born monster.

CANTO VII.



T so chanced that a handmaid of the relations of Kaikeyi who on that account lived with her, went up of her own accord to the terrace of the palace that shone bright like the moon. From that terrace Manthara surveyed Ayodhya with its lovely royal roads well-watered and adorned with floral wreaths and beautified with very costly flags and pennons, with covered ways and many a newly-placed awning thronged by people who had just bathed, with its streets full of the twice-born shouting with garlands and sweetmeats in their hands. She saw

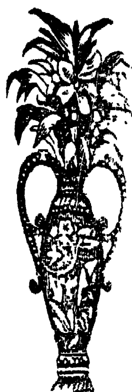
the doors of temples painted white and heard the sound of musical instruments all around. She found joyous crowds scattered all over and heard the chantings of the Vedas. She noted the delight of the excellent elephants and horses and heard the cows and bulls bellowing joyously. Beholding Ayodhya thus with its streams of flags raised aloft by its joyous and delighted citizens, Manthara became exceedingly surprised. Manthara enquired of the nurse who was standing at no great distance with eyes expanded on account of joy and clad in pure white silk. 'Does Rama's mother give away rich presents to the crowds to-day because she has attained some excellent object or because she is overjoyed with boundless wealth? What is the cause of this overflow of joy on the part of the people? Please enlighten me whether it is perhaps due to anything which the monarch might cause to be done being elated with joy.' The nurse bursting with uncontrollable delight communicated to the hunchback the glad tale of Rama's fortune. 'To-morrow morning under the constellation Pushya, king Dasaratha will instal the pure Rama of

subdued passions, on the throne as Yuvaraja,' Hearing the words of the nurse the hunchback in a rage quickly descended from the terrace of the palace that resembled the peak of high Kailasa. Burning with rage Manthara with sinful thoughts approached Kaikeyi who was sleeping and addrsssed her thus. 'Arise, O senseless one, why do you sleep? Peril surrounds you. Why do you not understand the flood of sin that flows over you. You are boasting of prosperity when evil lurks in its shape. Your fortune is gone like the water of a river during the summer.' These cruel words thus addressed by the sinful hunchback, the enraged Manthara, filled Kaikeyi with intense grief. Kaikeyi told the hunchback—'What is wrong, O Manthara, I observe you much distressed with grief and with a mournful countenance.' Hearing these sweet words of Kaikeyi Manthara, skilled in speech, replied with great fury. That hunchback became more grief-stricken and desirous of the good of Kaikeyi spoke these words thereby making her miserable and estranging Raghava. 'Enduring and terrible peril awaits thee O lady. King

Dasaratha is going to instal Rama as heir-apparent. Hence I am plunged in deep despair and my soul is a prey to pain and care. As though the flames consumed me I came here for your good. Your grief O Kaikeyi, intensifies the grief to me. Your prosperity shall be my prosperity. There is no doubt about this. Born of a royal line you are the consort of the lord of the Earth. Why do you not then understand the sternness of regal morality. Your husband speaks morals but is a cheat. He speaks graciously but is cruel at heart. You are too simple and hence you are deceived. He speaks soft soothing words to you but devoid of substance. Your husband shall this day enrich Kausalya with wealth and power. Having sent away Bharata to his relations that wicked-minded one shall opportunely establish Rama in the kingdom rid of its thorn. O girl, you have cherished a foe not knowing the same, deluded thereto by the name of husband, just like a mother desirous of good takes unto her lap a venomous snake, for just like a snake or a neglected enemy king Dasaratha has to-day dealt with you and

your son. You are indeed, O guileless lady, though deserving of eternal happiness, being victimized along with yours by that sinful and false-tounged king consecrating Rama in the kingdom. Up Kaikeyi while there is yet time, preserve thyself, and quickly prevent the crime. Up from thy careless ease and free yourself, O Queen, your son and me.' Hearing those words of Manthara in her bed, that lovely-faced damsel rose up full of joy resembling autumnal moon. Kaikeyi was indeed extremely joyful and wonderstruck and gave a beautiful ornament to the hunch-back as present. Having presented the hunchback with that ornament that excellent of damsels Kaikeyi again spoke to Manthara thus. O Manthara, highly welcome is the news that you have now communicated to me. You have told me what is very dear to me. Tell me what more I shall do for you. I don't find any difference between Rama or Bharata. Therefore I am highly pleased with the fact that the king is about to instal Rama in the kingdom. There is nothing more dear to me O beloved one, than the pleasing news you have now conveyed. You

have given me the best and the most pleasing news. Hence choose whatever you wish. I shall grant you the best of desires.



CANTO VIII.



ANTHARA disgustingly threw away that ornament and full of anger and grief told Kaikeyi these words—'How is it, O simple girl, that you feel joyful at an inopportune moment. You do not understand that you are engulfed in an ocean of grief. Troubled as I am with grief, O lady, I laugh inwardly at you, to see you joyous when you have met with a mighty calamity at which you should lament. I mourn for thy want of sense; what woman of a prudent mind would rejoice in the advancement of her rival co-wife's son which is come as that of death itself. From Bharata

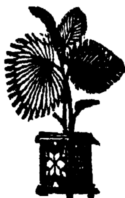
proceeds Rama's fear concerning the kingdom to which both have an equal claim. Hence my heart is full of anxiety, for, those who fear are those we dread. The mighty bowman Lakshmana serves Rama's cause with all his soul and Satrughna sides Bharata just as Lakshmana sides Rama. By reason of contiguity also O fair lady, Bharata alone stands next in the order of obtaining the kingdom. The two younger ones are far remote. When I think of your sons I tremble with fear from Rama who is learned, prompt and well-bred in martial science. Highly fortunate is indeed Kausalya whose son is to be installed by the twice-born to-morrow under the constellation of Pushya on the mighty throne of Yuvaraja. You shall with folded hands wait as a slave upon Kausalya who shall be brimming over with intense joy with all her foes discomfited. Then you shall, along with us, become the slave of Kausalya and your son also shall become the servant of Rama. Rama's excellent wives shall indeed beam with joy while your daughters-in-law shall on Bharata's fall become stricken with grief'. Seeing Manthara

complaining thus with great displeasure, the lady Kaikeyi praised the virtues of Rama. 'Rama is born as the eldest son of the monarch. He is trained with care by the elders. He is virtuous, grateful, true and pure. He certainly deserves therefore the throne of Yuvaraja. May he live long and protect his brothers and servants just like his father. Why do you, O hunchback, grieve so much on hearing of the installation of Rama. Bharata also, the foremost of men, will surely after the lapse of hundred years succeed Rama in the kingdom of his father's and grandfather's. When prosperity has been attained and is continuing and when fortune shall smile in future also, what for, O Manthara, do you grieve? Dear as Bharata is to me, Rama is dearer still. He is more dutiful to me than to Kausalya. If the kingdom goes to Rama it goes equally to Bharata, for indeed Rama considers his brothers just as himself.' Hearing these words of Kaikeyi Manthara became terribly afflicted and sighing long and hot she spoke to Kaikeyi thus.—' Percieving a fancied evil on account of your ignorance

you do not understand that you are drowning in an ocean of sorrow full of misery and pain. Rama shall be the king and after him his son shall succeed and O Kaikeyi, Bharata shall be excluded from the royal line. All the sons of a king do not, O fair lady, share the kingdom, for if all are made kings mighty trouble would ensue. Therefore O Kaikeyi of faultless limbs, monarchs as a rule entrust the royal duties to the eldest son however virtuous the others may be. Know then, O affectionate one, that your son shall be completely undone, being thrown out from the royal line, deprived of happiness like one forlorn. I hurried to you for your sake, but without understanding my object you wish to bestow on me presents for the triumph of your rival wife. Certainly, Rama, when once he obtains the kingdom without any foes whatever, will drive Bharata into exile to distant lands or even to the other world. You yourself have sent the child Bharata to his uncle's home. Affection springs even towards inanimate objects by nearness. Satrughna, the ardent follower of Bharata, has also gone with him. Just as Lakshmana

fcllows Rama so he follows Bharata. There is an ancient tale that a certain tree which the forest dwellers wanted to fell was saved from the dire peril by the reeds that stood around it. Rama is the protector of Lakshmana and Lakshmana is the protector of Rama. Their fraternal bonds of friendship is well renowned in the world just like that of the Aswins. Therefore Rama will never do any harm to Lakshmana and there is no doubt whatever that Bharata will come to grief at the hands of Rama. Therefore, O lady, let Raghava go to the forest expelled from the royal palace. This plan is what pleases me most and it will also secure your weal. Thus shall all your relations attain prosperity if Bharata gets the kingdom of his ancestors in accordance with virtue. Your young son who deserves all happiness and who is the natural rival of Rama, how can he, with all his wealth denuded, live under the sway of Rama who shall be highly prosperous. Therefore it behoves you to protect Bharata from Rama just like the leader of an elephant-herd protects the same when it is chased in

the forest by the lion. In days of yore you have defied Kausalya on account of your bliss and pride and will she the mother of Rama and your rival now forbear to show you the vengeful rancour of a foe. When Rama obtains the sway of this Earth with its oceans of priceless gems and mountains and cities, then O fair lady shall you be rendered forlorn along with Bharata and attain miserable discomfiture. When Rama obtains the sway of this earth then shall Bharata be surely lost; therefore consider over the means of obtaining the kingdom for your son and of exiling at once the enemy.





CANTO IX.



AIKEYI, when she was thus addressed, became flushed with fury and sighing hot and hard spoke to Manthara thus —"I shall now very soon send Rama from here away to the forest and shall quickly have Bharata installed in the throne of Yuvaraja. But now consider, Oh Manthara, by what means Bharata may obtain the kingdom and Rama never." Thus addressed by the lady, the wicked Manthara darkly plotting Rama's fall replied thus to Kaikeyi—"I shall tell you now, Oh Kaikeyi, listen to my words, the means by which your son Bharata alone can obtain the kingdom. Do you not remember, Oh Kaikeyi, or remember-

ing well do you pretend now or do you wish to hear from me what you yourself once before told me—a story which is quite meet for thy need now? Oh gay lady, if it is your will, hear that story repeated by me. Please yourself by hearing what I now say and when you have fully heard it ponder over it." Hearing those words of Manthara, Kaikeyi raised herself a little from her tastefully spread bed and said—"Tell me the means, Oh Manthara, by which Bharata may obtain the kingdom and Rama never." Thus addressed by the lady, Manthara, the evil-minded hunchback, spoke as follows darkly plotting Rama's fall. "When gods and asuras fought of old, your lord in company with saintly kings went to the war with thee to help the king of the gods. Reaching the Southern quarters, Oh Kaikeyi, where Dandaka's mighty wilds are spread, he went to the city renowned as Vaijayanta ruled by Sambara whose flag displayed the hugest monster of the sea. Sambara was a mighty asura, being master of a hundred wiles and un-conquered by the hosts of the devas, he gave battle to Indra the lord of

gods. In that terrific battle the Rakshasas stealthily approached during nights the maimed and wounded warriors who were sleeping and killed them. At that time the highly powerful king Dasaratha fought there against the *asuras* most heroically and was wounded by their weapons. Then, Oh lady, you removed him from the battle-ground just as he lost his consciousness. Sadly wounded as he was by the enemies' weapons, your husband was then safely restored to health by you. Well-pleased with you, Oh lovely one, he asked you to choose two boons. You then replied to your husband that you would reserve the right to choose the two boons whenever you were in need of them and that noble lord agreed accordingly. I am not personally aware of this incident, but you yourself have told me of this before. I have carefully treasured the story in my mind on account of my affection to you. Now stop the arrangements for the installation of Rama and turn them into another direction. Solicit those two boons of your husband namely the installation of Bharata and the exile of Rama for

fourteen years. When Rama is banished into the forest for fourteen years your son will become well established in the affections of his subjects. Oh daughter of Asvapati, go now to the Chamber of Wrath and clad in soiled garment, lie down on the uncovered floor. When the King comes, speak not a word to him nor meet his eye. But on beholding him weep on with overwhelming grief.— You have always been the darling of your husband and I have no doubt about it. For your sake the king would even enter into the blazing fire. He would never anger you or brook to meet your wrathful look and to gratify your desire the king would surely even die. He can never set aside your word. Learn now, Oh dull of sense, the power of your beauty. King Dasaratha would offer you gems and pearls and gold and innumerable precious stones. But do not turn your mind to them. Those two boons which Dasaratha gave on the occasion of the battle between the gods and the asuras, remind him of them, Oh highly fortunate one and you shall not fail to achieve your object. When he grants you the boon after having

himself raised you from the ground bind him well with oaths he cannot break and then choose these boons. Let Rama be exiled into the forest for nine years and five and let Bharata be made the king of the earth by that best of kings. When Rama is banished into the forest for fourteen years, your son rooted firm, will stand alone having grown up to vigour. Do you therefore, Oh lady, demand the banishment of Rama as your boon. For, by this means, Oh fair one, all your son's interests will be secured. Thus banished, Rama will no longer possess the hearts of the people and Bharata, rid of his foes, shall become king. By the time Rama returns from the forest by that time your son would have become deeply rooted in the hearts of the people having made a number of friends. I consider this to be the hour to move the mind of the King. Be bold. Stop the arrangements for the installation of Rama and turn them in another direction."

Thus she was made by her to accept as good that which was really evil and Kaikeyi full of hope and joy told thus to Manthara—By that speech of the hunchback, the

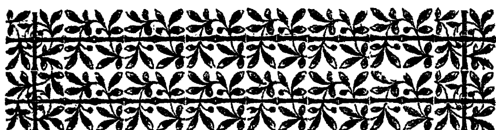
exceedingly beautiful Kaikeyi became highly wonderstruck and was led astray just like a young girl. She said "Oh Kubja. I did not understand your excellence. You have spoken words of best wisdom. No hunchback in all the earth can match you for wise resolve. You alone are devoted to my interest always and ever wish my welfare. I had not understood aright Oh Kubja, the doings of the King. There are in the world, full of guile and sin and spite, mis-shapen hunchbacks shocking the sight. But you are fair, and formed to please, being bent like a lotus by the breeze. Your chest is weighed down by the hump and is high near the shoulders and beneath is the belly graced with a beautiful navel, shy as it were. Your hind parts are full and the breasts are firm. Your face shines bright like the pure moon, Oh Manthara, your hips are smooth adorned with girdled ornaments. Your thighs are long and neat and your feet are broad, Oh Manthara, clad in silk. When you come before me with your bent bones, you look like the royal swan. All the thousand wiles which the Asura Sambara

possessed are to be found in you also. Besides that you possess several thousands more. This hump of yours which is long and bent like the nave of a chariot-wheel is surely the abode of an endless store of plots, wizard wiles and warrior lore. Round it, Kubja, I will fling the golden garland when Bharata is installed as king and Rama is exiled. The garland shall be made, Oh beautiful one, of pure gold and well polished. When my object is attained and my hopes are fulfilled I shall smear your hump with sandal pastes. I shall adorn your face with a lovely and auspicious tilaka mark. I shall also cause, Oh Kubja, beautiful ornaments to be made for you. Wearing elegant garments you shall roam about like a goddess, bidding the moon itself to compare its beauty with a face so incomparably fair. You shall attain eminence scorning your foes. Several hunchback women adorned with all ornaments shall serve your feet just as you always serve me." Thus addressed by Kaikeyi, the hunchback spoke to her thus as she was lying down on the pure white bed just like fire on the altar. "Oh fair one,

dams are not erected when the water is gone. Therefore be up and doing and keep the King in view." Thus encouraged by Manthara the large-eyed lady Kaikeyi exalting in her pride of beauty went with the hunchback to the Chamber of Wrath. Then that best of dames flung down her garland of priceless pearls as also innumerable precious and lovely ornaments. Then she of golden form under the influence of Kubja's words, laid herself down on the ground. Kaikeyi then told Manthara—"Go and report to the King. Oh Kubja, that I am dead here. Rama shall go to the forest and Bharata shall obtain the kingdom. No more do I care for gold or gems or dainty fare. If Rama is to be installed that is the end of my life." Again the hunchback addressed the mother of Bharata, the queen of the lord of the Earth, these cruel and bold words which foretold good to Bharata and evil to Rama. "If Rama obtains this kingdom you shall surely suffer with your son. Therefore, Oh fair one, strive in such a way that your son Bharata shall be installed." Thus exceedingly stung and

wounded by the wordy shafts that proceeded again and again from that hunchback the queen pressed her hands against her bosom and over and over again praised Kubja in her anger. "It shall be your task to tell the King that I have gone to the abode of Yama from here or happy Bharata will attain his desire and be king when Rama shall be banished to the forest for a long time. If Rama does not go to the forest from here I do not care for beds or garlands or sandal or scents or drinks or food. I do not want anything, nay, I count my very life as nought." Having spoken these exceedingly cruel words the fair lady stripped off all her ornaments and lay down on the bare earth uncovered by any beds just like a fallen kinneri. With darkened brow and furious mien and stripped of her priceless gems and garlands, the wife of the lord of men lay down dejected just like the sky enveloped in darkness with the stars shrouded.





CANTO X.



HUS perversely advised by the exceedingly wicked Manthara the fair lady lay down on the floor like a kinnari pierced with poisoned shafts resolving in her mind that it is a right course to adopt. Having made that resolve the poor fair one under the influence of Manthara's words, sighed long and hot like a serpent-girl and slowly told everything to Manthara. She then pondered for a while over the means which would secure her happiness. That friend and well-wisher, the hunchback, hearing of her firm resolution, rejoiced exceedingly as if she had already obtained success. Then that lady of the weaker sex bent upon her dire purpose and with her soul on fire lay on

the floor contracting her brows in a frown. Then all the wonderful chains and necklets and rare and costly jewels that were stripped off by Kaikeyi lay down on the ground and those cast-off garlands and ornaments that lay scattered on the ground lent lustre to the floor just as stars light up the firmament. Thus she lay prostrate in the Chamber of Wrath clad in dirty garments and with her hair bound fast in a single braid like a heavenly nymph dismayed.

Having issued orders for the installation of Rama the monarch withdrew and retired to his chambers, after first dismissing his courtiers. He thought that the installation of Rama was now well-known throughout the town and now entered the harem to communicate the glad news to his beloved spouse. The illustrious monarch of subdued senses entered the excellent abode of Kaikeyi just as the Moon threatened by Rahu enters the the sky pale with the white clouds. There, in the palace of Kaikeyi, were found parrots and peacocks in plenty, while ever and anon was heard the sweet notes of kraunchas and swans. Here waited dwarf and hunchback

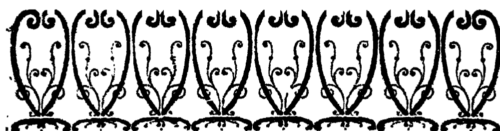
maids. There played the sweet music of lute and lyre. Here were found bowers made of twining creepers. There shone artistic summer-houses fragrant with Champaka and Asoka flowers and full of silver, gold and ivory daises. Bright with trees ever bearing fruits and flowers, and tanks and surrounded with lovely seats made of silver, gold and ivory. It was rich with various kinds of food and drink as also numerous sweets. There were also to be found highly precious gems and ornaments. In short it resembled heaven itself. The monarch entered that exceedingly beautiful harem of his; but did not see his beloved Kaikeyi on the excellent couch. Troubled with lust, the lord of men not seeing his darling wife there, became grieved and made enquiries. For never before had that lady missed the hour of meeting and never till then did the king enter the empty room. Staying in the apartment, the king made enquiries about Kaikeyi, not knowing her till then to be selfish or otherwise. Then at length the warder-maid spoke with folded hands and trembling frame— "My lord, the queen is highly enraged and has

sought the Chamber of Wrath." On hearing the words of the warder-maid, the king became exceedingly anxious and assailed with fierce grief, with his senses troubled and agitated. Repairing to the Chamber of Wrath the Lord of the Earth was consumed by torturing fires of grief on beholding the lady lying on the ground in a most unbeseeming posture. The aged king, all pure within, saw the young spouse, dearer to him than his life, lying down on the ground resolved on sin just like some fair creeper uptorn or like the heavenly nymph forlorn, like a kinnari thrown down or an apsaras fallen from heaven or like a garland thrown aside or a doe ensnared. As some wild elephant who tries to soothe his consort as she lies struck by the hunter's venomed dart, so the king with a disturbed heart strove with soft hand and fond caress to soothe the distress of his darling queen. The lover addressed these words to the lady of the lotus eyes. "I know not, Queen, why you should be angry with me. Say who has slighted you or whence has come the cause of such offence that you lie low in the dust and cause me

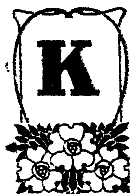
thereby intense grief. What for do you lie in the ground when I who am bent in your welfare am yet alive. You afflict my heart as though you are struck down by some malignant spirit. There are with me several skilful physicians whom I have pleased in all ways. They will surely make you well again, Oh sweet lady, tell me your sickness. Whom do you want to please now or who has done you anything unpleasent, who shall now obtain his desire or who shall be punished terribly? Weep not, my lovely queen, nor cause your frame to wither. Speak and the guiltless shall be condemned or the guilty shall be free. The poor shall be enriched or the rich shall be abased. Myself and all who are mine are under your influence. I can never check even one wish of yours. Now by my life I pray you to tell me the thoughts that dwell in your bosom. Knowing your power over me it is not fair on your part to doubt me. I swear by all my merits to abide by your pleasure. My kingdom extends as far as the light of the solar disc. The ancient Sindhus and Souviras, Sourashtras and Dakshinapathas,

Vangas, Angas and Maghadas, the Matsyas the prosperous Kasis and Kosalas all these belong to me. All are rich in numerous treasures in gold, corn, sheep, goats and kind. Choose from among them, Oh Kaikeyi, whatever your heart desires. Why do you afflict yourself, Oh timid one. Arise, Oh lovely damsel, arise and tell me Kaikeyi, truly whence arose thy fear. I shall dispel it immediately just as the sun dispels the frost." Thus addressed she became consoled and longed to unfold her dire purpose and sought again to wring the bosom of her lord the king.





CANTO XI,



KAIKEYI spoke these remorseless words to that protector of the earth who was pierced by the darts of Cupid, and was under the influence of Love's force. "Oh lord, I have not been wronged by anybody nor has any one insulted me. I have a certain desire and I wish that you should fulfil it. Now pledge your word to me if you are willing to have it fulfilled. Then I shall reveal my desire." Thereupon the highly effulgent lover with a gentle smile slowly lifted up Kaikeyi's head in his hands and addressed her of lovely smiles. "Oh proud one, do you not know that excepting Rama, the tiger among men, there is no other person on earth who is dearer to me than yourself. By the noble Rama the foremost of Kshatriyas and the mainstay of my life, I swear to you. Tell me

your heart's desire. By him, whom if I do not see for one hour I needs must die, by that Rama, O, Kaikeyi I swear to you that your words shall be done. By the bull among men whom I hold dearer than myself or other sons, by that Rama, Kaikeyi, I swear to you that your word shall be done. Speak darling and if you choose, request to have the heart from out my breast. Regard my words, O, Kaikeyi and name the wish which your mind thinks fit to frame. Knowing your power over me it does not behove you to doubt me. I will certainly fulfil your wish and by my good deeds I swear this to you." Then intent upon her own interests the lady Kaikeyi, overjoyed to see the King come round to her desire, spoke these harsh words on account of the absence of an umpire. Delighted at the King's words she revealed to him in an abominable speech her intentions which were dreadful as the approaching Death. "You swear repeatedly and confer on me a boon. Let the three and thirty gods headed by Agni be my witnesses. Let the Sun and Moon and the Sky and the Planets and Night and Day

and Quarters, the Wind and Earth along with the Gandharvas and Rakshasas, the ghosts that roam in the midnight, the demons and the household gods that remain in the house and all other living beings let all these hear, and mark thy words. Let all the gods listen to me. This King who is truthful, highly effulgent, virtuous and in right earnest, grants me now this boon." Having thus bound the great bowman with teacherous arts and oaths, the lady again addressed her bounteous lord who was blinded with love, "Remember, O King, that long past day when during the battle between Devas and Asuras the enemy had well nigh bereft thee of life and made thee fall down. Remember, O lord, that it was only I who protected thee with ceaseless care and attention. Then, pleased with me, you granted me two boons and I now demand of thee, O monarch, good and true, those two offered boons which I had pledged with you then. If you now refuse to grant me the boons which you had then dutifully sworn, I shall, despised by you, renounce my life immediately. Ensnared by the mere speech of Kaikeyi the King completely fell under her influence and went to

his destruction just like the deer that enters the noose. Then the Queen told that love-stricken King who was eager to grant the boons. "The two boons, O lord, that were then granted to me by you, those two boons O lord of the earth, I shall ask of you now, listen to my words? The preparations that are being made for the installation of Rama, with these preparations themselves let my Bharata be installed. The second boon, O, lord which you out of pleasure granted to me, during that battle between Devas and Asuras, the time is now come for me to claim that also. Forth to the Dandaka forest let Rama go for nine and five years and dwell there as a hermit with deer skin, coat and matted hair. Let Bharata obtain the place of Yuvaraja without a rival. This is my supreme desire. I am simply asking for the boons already granted. Let me see Rama starting at once. By sticking to truth become the King of Kings. Protect the fair name of your race, character and birth. Those rich in penance say that truthful speech brings supreme good to men in the next world".

CANTO XII.



HEARING those terrible words of Kaikeyi, the monarch stood for a time absorbed in thought while anguish wrung his heart. "Is this a dream or am I bewildered in my mind? Is this due to the influence of some evil spirit or to the affectation of my mind?" Thus brooding, the King did not find rest. Regaining his senses after a swoon he was consumed with grief at the words of Kaikeyi. Distressed and trembling like a deer when it sees the approach of the dreaded tigress, he sat on the uncovered ground and drew a long sigh. Like a wild and highly venomous snake confined by charms within a ring, the lord of men indignantly exclaimed "shame on thee." Then in sense-bewildering pain he again fainted on the

ground, At length when he slowly regained his senses he spoke to Kaikeyi as his eye-balls burned with the wild fury of his ire." Oh cruel and vile wretch, the destroyer of my race. what wrong has been done to you by Rama or by myself. Speak, Oh wicked one, Rama always attends on you as on his own mother. What for have you commenced to bring this ruin on his head? I now see that I have brought you to my house for my self-destruction without knowing that though you are the daughter of a king you are in truth a serpent with virulent poison. The whole mankind speaks well of Rama and praises him. What fault can I find in him that I should desert my son? I shall rather abandon Kausalya, or Sumitra, or even my glory, nay my own life, but never shall I abandon Rama who is always fond of his parents. Just to see my eldest son is itself the highest bliss and if I see him not I lose my life. The world may stand sunless, the grain may thrive without the genial rain, but if my Rama be not nigh, my spirit from its frame will fly. So enough. Abandon this resolve, Oh you of simple plans. I

shall touch thy feet with my head. Be pleased towards me, Oh wicked dame. What can have laid you to plot so cruelly. Perchance your purpose is to sound my love or otherwise to Bharata. Let it be. The words that these days you have spoken in praise of Rama, *viz.*, 'that illustrious Rama is my eldest son and he is the most righteous person' were all evidently feigned and designed with a view to please me." For, hearing now the installation of Rama, you are troubled with grief and afflict me also considerably. Perhaps in this empty hall you have become possessed and now you speak under another's influence. Now on Ikshvaku's ancient righteous race falls foul disorder and disgrace, because Oh Queen, you have become now perverted in your mind. Not once, Oh broad-eyed dame, have you been of old guilty of improper or unpleasant conduct towards me.

Hence I will not now believe thy wicked words. Is not Rama equal in your estimation with your noble Bharata? You yourself on several occasions have declared to me like that, Oh simple girl. How can you

bring yourself to be pleased, Oh timid lady, with banishment to the forest of the illustrious and righteous Rama for a period of fourteen years. How can it please you if the exceedingly tender Rama whose heart is ever intent on righteousness dwells in the extremely terrible forest? What for, have you chosen this banishment of the lovely and beautiful-eyed Rama who is always attending on you? Rama always serves you better than Bharata himself. Hence I do not perceive any superior regard in Bharata towards you. Who, excepting that foremost of men, will more devotedly serve you, honor you and truthfully obey your words? Neither the numerous ladies of the palace nor the countless followers can breathe a word against my son Rama of real or alleged misconduct. Appeasing all creatures by his pure and gentle soul, Rama, the tiger among men, catches the hearts of men. He wins the subjects with his truth and the poor with his gifts, the elders he wins with his services and the enemies with his bow in battle. Truth and charity and asceticism, the hand to give and the heart to feel, purity and

straight-forwardnesss, knowledge and meek. obdience to elders—these qualities certainly grace my Rama. How can you, Oh lady, plot thus sinfully against Rama in whom these virtues shine. He is so very straight-forward whose glory vies with the sages and who is a peer of the gods. I do not remember having ever heard him utter any harsh or bitter word to pain any living creature. How can I now address my beloved son these cruel words for your sake—what stay have I save him in whom abide forgiveness, patience, charity, truth, righteousness, gratitude and harmlessness towards all creatures. Have mercy, Oh Queen, on me, a poor old man nearing the end. Show some pity towards me in my distress and in my week lamentations. Whatever can be obtained within the sea-girt world, all that I shall bestow on you. May you not get angry. I fold my hands suppliantly, Oh Kaikeyi, and touch your feet. Be you the protector of Rama. Let not unrighteousness defile me here." With fierce words the fiercer Kaikeyi, replied the King who was pleading again and again to reach the shores of the

ocean of grief, who was staggered, being overwhelmed with woe and who bewailed senselessly, consumed with grief. "If, Oh monarch, you now repent the two boons which you have already granted, how will you, Oh hero, pose in the world as righteous. When the numerous saintly kings assemble around you, and ask you about this, what will you reply, Oh Knower of virtues. You will say 'She to whose efforts I owe my life, she who protected me with tender care, in the case of that Kaikeyi I have been false.' Surely, Oh lord of men, you will bring disgrace to all the monarchs since, having granted the boon this very day, you talk again otherwise. In the story of the hawk and the dove Saibya gave his own flesh for the bird and Alarka gave his own eyes and gained an exalted state. Even the sea keeps his promise and never goes beyond the shores. Remembering the old deeds, do not make your promise false. Renouncing virtue and having installed Rama in the Kingdom, Oh wicked one, you evidently want to sport always with Kausalya. Now call it by whatever name you will, justice, injustice, truth or

falsehood, that which you have promised me shall on no account be transgressed. If Rama be installed I shall immediately drink poison before you and will die in your very presence. It is indeed far better for me to die than to see even a single day the mother of Rama receiving the homage of the people. I swear, Oh Lord of men, by Bharata and by myself that I will not be pleased with anything else except the banishment of Rama." Saying thus much Kaikeyi ceased, and did not speak again to the bewailing king. Hearing these extremely cruel words of Kaikeyi asking for the exile of Rama and the prosperity of Bharata, the King with troubled senses did not talk to Kaikeyi for a while. He gazed steadfastly at the beloved lady who spoke so very rudely. Hearing those most unpleasant words which were as hard and cruel as the thunderbolt and which were full of pain and grief, the King became afflicted with sorrow. Pondering over the efforts of the lady and also over the terrible vow she has made, the king sighed forth as "Ah Rama" and fell down like a smitten tree. The King, whom the whole

world obeyed, lay down with his senses lost like one insane, faint as a sick man, weak with pain, like a snake with its energies gone. With sad faint words the King thus addressed Kaikeyi.—" By whom Kaikeyi, were you taught this flattering hope which is fraught with ruin. You are not ashamed to talk to me like this as one whose heart is possessed with the devil. I did not know before when you were young all this vicious character of yours. Now I find the very reverse. Whence has proceeded your fear that you ask for such a kind of boon—the installation of Bharata in the kingdom and the exile of Rama in the forest. If you would fain do good to your husband or to the people or to Bharata himself, then cease from this attitude. Spurn the perfidious course, Oh wicked traitress, fierce and vile, who lovest deeds of sin and guile. What wrong or falsehood do you observe either in me or in Rama. Setting aside Rama, Bharata will never accept the Kingdom. For I think Bharata's heart is set on righteousness more firmly than Rama's. Uttering the words 'go to the forest' how can I look Rama in the face

when it loses its colour like the moon when it is eclipsed? How can I see all my well-considered plan, settled in consultation with friends, ruined like the army destroyed by enemies? Will not the Kings assembled from different regions say of me thus?—Alas, how did this puerile descendent of Ikshvaku reign so long. When the numerous elderly virtuous and well-learned people ask me about Rama what shall I then say? Shall I say that I banished Rama being sore pressed thereto by Kaikeyi. Although I speak the truth, hearing them, all will hold me false and weak. What will Kausalya say to me when Rama goes to the forest and what answer shall I give her, having injured her like this? Kausalya always attends on me like a slave and with the sister's care, she blends the love of a mother, a wife and a friend. In spite of all her tender solicitude, her noble son and her loving words, she who has been deserving of my regard, has been neglected by me on your account. But my heart is grieved for the love and care I have bestowed on you just as the sick person repents the dainty meals and condiments partaken by him.

Beholding Rama insulted and driven out to the forest how will the terrified Sumitra confide in me. Ah cruel it is that Vaidehi will have to hear of two sorrowful events namely the death of myself and the depature of Rama to the forest. Vaidehi will indeed wring my aged bosom and kill me with her grief, sad as a fair nymph deserted by her lord on the slopes of the Himalayas. After seeing the departure of Rama to the great forest and the weeping Maithili, I don't think I shall live long and you shall then become a widow and govern the kingdom along with your son. I have no zest to live, Oh lady, after Rama's banishment. I am sorry I accepted you, a vile, traitress as good and true and am deceived as one who in his thirst has drunk of the good-looking liquor mixed with poison. You speak soothingly using soft words of guile and then kill me just as the wild hunter kills the deer after luring it with the sound of music. Surely all noble men will reproach me as ignoble, as one who has sold his son. They would scorn me in the street just as they would do a drunken Brahmin. Ah me, for my unhappy fate, for

I am compelled to tolerate your words. Such woe has come upon me as a result of sin committed in previous births. For many a day with sinful care I cherished thee, Oh wicked woman, just as one preserves through ignorance the chord that is said to bind oneself. I sported with you not knowing you to be death itself and dallied with you in private just as a child with a venomous snake. All the world will surely be justified in cursing me as the wicked person who made his son fatherless. They will say King Dasaratha is very foolish blinded by love. For the sake of a woman, he has banished his dear son Rama into the forest. Already emaciated by the vows and rigours of the student-life and restrained by the elders, Rama, at a time when he is to enjoy life will again undergo this mighty trouble. My son is incapable of uttering a second word when I ask him to go to the forest. His reply will simply be. "All right" when I tell him to go to the forest. If my Rama disobeys me it would be welcome to me. But my child will not do that. He is pure-hearted and will not know my intentions. When asked to

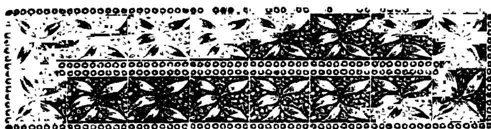
go to the forest he will simply reply, "All right," and on the departure of Rama to the forest all the world! will execrate me and will deem me unbearable and death itself will lead me to Yama's abode. When I am dead and when that foremost of men, Rama, has gone to the forest I don't know what evil you will seek to my remaining relations and friends. Losing Kausalya, myself, Rama and her two sons, the queen Sumitra unable to bear her grief will surely follow me. Having thrown into hell Kausalya, Sumitra and myself along with the three sons, do you Oh Kaikeyi, enjoy life. You shall protect the eternal and virtuous line of the Ikshvakus which was incapable of being shaken up to now and which is now left to wild confusion bereft of myself and Rama. If this banishment of Rama be pleasing to Bharata also, let him not perform the funeral obsequies when I am dead. Alas vile foe, the cause of my ill. obtain at last your cursed will. When I am dead and when the bull among men, Rama, is gone to the forest you, a widow, shall then rule the Kingdom with your son. In the guise of a princess you have dwelt in my

palace. Untold infamy and gross insult will surely be mine in the world. All creatures will disregard me just as they would do a sinner. Having gone often and often in chariots and elephants and horses how will my child the noble Rama roam on foot in the mighty forest? He, for whom the cooks wearing earrings vied with each other in preparing the best and the most delicious food and drink, how can he now live on the forest-food eating astringent, bitter and pungent roots and fruits. Having worn costly and valuable garments and lived long in ease and pleasure, how can he now dwell on bare earth wearing a piece of orange-coloured cloth. Whose are these cruel words unthought of up to now—Rama's departure to the forest and the installation of Bharata? Shame, shame on women, vile rogues, ever selfish; why should I blame all the women, I shall speak of the mother of Bharata alone. Oh worthless, cruel and selfish dame, has God created you solely for my grief and woe. What fault do you find in me or in my son, Rama, who loves thee so. Fond wives may flee from their husbands and fathers may desert

their sons; but all the world would rave to see my Rama plunged in sorrow. When I hear my son coming adorned like the illustrious son of the celestials, I rejoice and when I actually see him, I feel my youth again renewed. There might be life without the Sun, or even if Indra send no rain, but seeing Rama banished from here I think none would remain alive. You, a wrong-doer and a foe eager to destroy, I have harboured you in my house to be as it were my death. I have for a long time held you on my lap, you a highly venomed snake, and I am lost on account of that folly. Let Bharata along with you rule the Kingdom with its towns, forts and mountains bereft of myself, Rama and Lakshmana and you had better produce joy to all my enemies. Plotter of woe, breeder of evil, for the speech which you have dared to utter now, why do not your teeth fall down from your head scattered in thousand pieces. Rama never spoke any wrong or unkind words to you and he does not know to speak harsh. How can you find fault in Rama who speaks always pleasantly and whom all admire

always for his virtues. Yield yourself to despair or burn yourself or otherwise destroy yourself and sink into the Earth drifted in a thousand ways. I will never act up to your extremely cruel words which are fraught with evil to me, Oh dust of the royal race of the Kekayas. I do not wish you, Oh, wretch, to live, you who are the ruin of your own race. who are eager to tear my heart with its strings and who always speak false and base words keen as a razor. My life is gone; why speak of joy. For parents where is happiness without the son? It behoves you not, Oh lady, to do me wrong. I touch your feet. Pray, be pleased towards me. As bewailing thus like one forlorn, the ruler of the Earth, heart-struck by the presumptuous Kaikeyi, strove to reach the outstretched legs of the lady, but fell down unable to do so like one enfeebled with disease





CANTO XIII.



NDESERVING of his mournful fate, the mighty king lay prostrate in unseeming guise just like Yayati fallen from the world of the gods when his merits were exhausted. That lady, the personification of ruin, triumphant and terrible without any fear, renewed again her demand for the same boons. "You boast yourself, Oh King, as truthful and firm in vows. Then why do you wish to deny me these boons?" Thus addressed by Kaikeyi the King Dasaratha, with anger raging in his breast, sank for a while beneath the pain and then replied—"When I am dead and when Rama, the bull among men, has gone to the

forest, alas, Oh ignoble foe, you had better please yourself with all your desires fulfilled. Even in heaven when the gods ask me of the welfare of Rama, how can I bear to hear of their reproach? If I speak the truth and say that Rama was banished by me, eager to fulfil the desire of Kaikeyi, they would not believe me but consider it untrue. Childless for a long time, I obtained at length with great difficulty the son Rama, the highly powerful. How can I now desert him? Rama is a warrior, has completed his learning, and controlled his anger and is ever patient. How can I banish such a lovely lotus-eyed Rama? How can I send to the Dandaka forest the lovely Rama, the long-armed and the highly powerful and whose hue resembles that of the blue lotus? How can I see the wise Rama in pain, he who is always accustomed to pleasures and never to pain? If, when doing any injury to Rama who does not deserve pain, I meet with my death then I shall attain happiness. Oh, cruel Kaikeyi of sinful purpose, why do you want to inflict this wrong upon my beloved Rama of truthful prowess? Untold infamy and gross insult

will surely be my lot in this world.'' As the monarch thus wailed and wept with maddening grief, the Sun went down and night was closing round. The night, though coupled with the moon, did not bring any relief to that wretched wailing King. Fixing his gaze on the skies, the old King Dasaratha wept with grief sighing hot and hard like one suffering from sickness. "Oh night, whom the stars adorn, I long not for the coming dawn. Be kind and show me mercy. I clasp my hands in supplication. Nay rather fly with swifter pace. I do not like to see the face of the cruel and dreadful Kaikeyi who is the cause of this mighty grief." Saying thus the King with clasped hands tried again to please Kaikeyi. "Oh lady, be pleased towards me who am good and pure, whose life is almost finished and who turn to you for succour. Do this favour, Oh sweet lady, especially to your King. I am not speaking in vain, Oh lovely hipped one. Do good, Oh girl; you are of fair heart indeed. So show mercy. Be you propitious towards me. Let Rama enjoy the Kingdom as your gift, Oh lady of soft black eye and thereby

win a name that shall never die. Oh lady of the dainty waist, graced with the beauty of eyes and of lips, do this act which would please me, Rama, the world, the elders and also Bharata." That wicked and cruel lady heard the extremely pitious and mournful cries of her husband whose reddened eyes were full of tears and whose intentions were quite pure. Hearing them she did not make any reply. Then that King, seeing his favourite and good wife persist in speaking wrong by insisting on the banishment of his son, fell down on the ground grief-stricken and senseless. As the wise King afflicted with sorrow was sighing hot and hard the night passed away. Then as he was being roused up, the King prevented his being awakened.





CANTO XIV.



EEING the descendent of Ikshvaku fallen on the ground whirling and senseless and distressed with grief on account of his son, that wicked lady spoke thus. "Having promised to grant me a boon why do you lie on the ground as if you have committed some sin. It behoves you to maintain your dignity and position. The righteous consider truth as the prime virtue and it is in the interests of truth that I exhort you to virtue. Having promised the hawk, the lord of the Earth, Saibya, gave his own body to the bird and thereby obtained exalted position. Similarly the effulgent Alarka, when a

Brahmin learned in the Vedas entreated him his own eyes, he gave them to him without any reluctance. The lord of rivers also, the mighty ocean, for the sake of truth only does not overstep the limits of its slender boundary. Truth is the one word denoting the Supreme and in Truth is firmly established righteousness. Truth alone is the eternal scripture and by Truth is attained the supreme state. If you would pursue the right follow the Truth. Let that boon be fruitful. You are indeed, Oh King, the giver of the boons. For the sake of your own desire, for virtue and at my instigation also you had better banish your son Rama and I am telling you thrice to do it. If you do not fulfil now this vow of yours, in your very presence I will die forlorn. Thus fearlessly urged by Kaikeyi, the King was helpless to extricate himself from the bond just like Bali who was unable to free himself from Indra's noose. Dismayed in soul and pale in countenance, the monarch trembled like a bull between the chariot wheel and the yoke. Then steadying himself with a great effort, the King with a vacant stare appeared to

look at Kaikeyi and spoke to her thus. "Oh wretch, I do hereby renounce that hand of yours which I accepted with Vedic rituals in the presence of Fire. I renounce it along with you and your son. The night has fled, Oh lady, the dawn is near. Soon will the holy elders be here and will certainly hurry me on to complete the installation of Rama. But under the circumstances Rama will have to make my funeral obsequies with the materials specially gathered for the installation of Rama. You and your son are not to offer me any watery offerings, if you prevent the installation of Rama, Oh you of foul conduct. Having just seen them bright and glad, I could not bring myself up to look upon the people with their heads bent, with their joys shattered and quite cheerless." While the noble monarch was thus speaking to Kaikeyi, the holy night with its characteristics--moon and star—gave place to the dawn. Then Kaikeyi of wicked ways versed in speech and wild with rage spoke again these fierce words to the King. "What is this you are talking about, Oh King, words which resemble poisonous disease. It be-

hoves you to cause your noble son Rama to be brought here. When the Kingdom is given to my son and when Rama is driven to the woods and when not a rival copes with me, you shall be free from the chains of duty.'" Thus goaded like an excellent steed urged by sharp spurs, the King replied to Kaikeyi thus—"My senses are astray and duty's bonds have tied my hands. I long to see my virtuous and beloved eldest son."

When the night had passed away and the Sun had arisen, when the hour of the conjunction of the holy star had arrived, the virtuous Vasishtha, surrounded by his disciples, entered the fair city having secured all the necessary materials. He traversed the city whose roads were all watered and swept clean, which was adorned with splendid banners, which was strewn all over with beautiful flowers, which looked beautiful with numerous garlands, which was full of joyous people with its shops overflowing with goods, which wore a highly festive appearance eager for the installation of Rama and which was perfumed all around with incense of sandal and agaru wood. Haviny passed through

such a city which resembled that of Indra, Vasishtha entered the magnificent palace where he heard the mingled notes of many a bird, where thronged the citizens and the villagers, and where graced the Brahmins and their assistants who were all fully conversant with the rites of sacrifice. Passing that crowd, the sage Vasishtha entered the inner apartments highly pleased. He there saw the charioteer Sumantra, the good-looking counsellor of the lion among men, just emerging through the gate. The highly effulgent sage Vasishtha told that skilled charioteer—"Oh Charioteer, inform the king quickly that I am come here. These golden vessels full of the sacred waters of the Ganges and the Ocean and the auspicious seat made of the Udumbara wood have been brought here for the installation. All kinds of seeds and precious scents and many a gem and ornament, honey, curds, ghee, fried rice, dharba grass, flowers and milk, eight lovely damsels and an excellent rutted elephant, an excellent car with four horses, a sword and an excellent bow, a palanquin with its, bearers, white umbrella bright as the

moon, two white chouries, a golden beaker a white bull high-humped and fair and girt with gold bands, a highly powerful and excellent lion with four large teeth and flowing mane, the throne and the tiger's skin, the sacred fire fresh kindled, the best musics of all sorts and dancing girls well adorned, the priests, Brahmins, kine and birds of the purest sort, the noblest men from town and village, merchants with their followers—these and several others, delighted at heart and conversing joyfully, have assembled here along with the kings for the sake of the installation of Rama. The day has dawned, Go and bid the great king to make haste so that Rama may obtain the kingdom during the influence of the holy star." Hearing these words of the noble sage, the charioteer's son entered the royal apartments praising the tiger among the kings. The gate-keepers who were eager to fulfil the king's pleasures were not able to check the entrance of this charioteer aged in years and who had been granted free access everywhere ere this. He stood beside the royal chief unwitting of his deadly grief and with sweet words began to

sing the praises of his lord and king. With clasped hands the charioteer Sumantra praised the lord of the Earth duly in his chambers. "As the sparkling sea delights our eyes at sunrise, so give us rapture, Oh king, with a delighted heart and yourself well pleased. Matali praised Indra at the self-same hour and thereupon Indra conquered all the asuras. Similarly I wake thee up. As the Vedas with their angas reveal the self-existent Brahma, so do I wake you up and reveal you to the world. As the lord of sky in company with the Moon wakes up the Earth full of creatures, so do I wake you up. Rise up, Oh great king, and clad in excellent robes and decked with ornaments, shine bright in form like the Sun issuing from Mount Meru. May the Sun and Moon, Siva and Agni, Kubera, Varuna and Indra may all these bless you, Oh Kakutstha with all success. The glorious night has passed and the auspicious day has dawned. Awake, Oh saintly king and fulfil your duty. Everything is ready for the installation of Rama. The townsmen and the countrymen and the merchants are all waiting with clasped hands.

The sage Vasishtha waits with all the Brahmins at the gate. Issue the orders quickly, Oh king, for the installation of Rama. As the sheep without a protector, as the army without a captain, as the night without the moon and as the kine without the bull, such is the state of the kingdom wherein a king is not found." Hearing those words of Sumantra, plain and appropriate, the lord of the earth felt deeper yet the sting of his sorrow. At length the virtuous and illustrious king raised his eyes red with weeping and mournful for the sake of his son and addressed the charioteer thus—"By your words you pierce my vitals all the more." Sumantra heard the sad reply and saw the pitiful state of the king and with folded hands and bowed head drew aside a little from that place. When the king was quite unable to speak himself on account of misery, Kaikeyi skilled in plots and plans, then addressed Sumantra thus—"Oh Sumantra, elated with joy on account of Rama, the king has kept awake the whole night and being nearly tired he is now overpowered with sleep. Therefore, Oh chario-

teer, you had better quickly go and fetch here the illustrious prince Rama. May good betide you. Do not hesitate in this affair." Thinking good of Rama the charioteer became delighted at heart and went out joyously quickened by the royal mandate. Being urged to hurry on by Kaikeyi, Sumantra thought thus—"It is clear that the virtuous Rama is to be brought here for the installation." Thinking thus the charioteer became filled with mighty joy and eager to see Rama, the highly powerful, Sumantra went out from the inner apartments which resembled the deep bay of the ocean. Emerging through the crowd of people he saw the gate before him. He hurried forth straight from the presence of the king looking at the gate-keepers on his way and saw before him all sorts of rich citizens assembled together and seated by the side of the kings.





CANTO XV.



HE, king's priests, brahmins learned in the Vedas, having slept the night, rose up early in the morning to attend the Court of the King. Ministers, captains of the army and the chief of the merchants had assembled there with a joyous heart to witness the installation of Rama. The Sun rose in the cloudless sky and the day advanced under the astral influence of Pushya. When the Karkataka lagna approached and when the Moon was in the star of Rama, the best of twice-born men gathered together all things necessary for the installation of Rama. Golden pitchers full of water, well-decorated auspicious seats, bright-car well spread with

tiger's skin, sacred water brought from the holy confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna as also from the several other holy rivers, lakes, wells and tanks, from streams that run eastwards, northwards and obliquely—from all these was the sacred water brought as also from the oceans all round. The golden and silver pitchers full of these sacred waters shone bright adorned with fried rice and covered over with milky branches and lotuses and water-lilies. Honey, curd, ghee, fried rice, dharba grass, flowers and milk, well-behaving dancing girls decked with all ornaments, an excellent chowri adorned with gold and gems and bright as the moon—all these were made ready for the sake of Rama. A white shining moon-like umbrella stood ready, awaiting the auspicious installation. The white bull was also ready as also the white horse. The stately elephant stood awaiting the royal ride and lovely damsels eight in number, stood all adorned. There was all music soft and loud and bards and ministrels swelled the crowd. Just as was customary during the installation of the Ikshvakus, so everything best was collected

together for the installation of the prince. When all were assembled there in obedience to the king's order and did not find the lord of the earth, they spoke among themselves thus :—'Who will inform the king of our arrival; the Sun has risen, everything is ready for the installation of the wise Rama and still we do not find the king.' When they were conversing thus, Sumantra, the approved of the king, replied to those royal chiefs in these words :—"In obedience to the command of the king I am just starting to fetch Rama quickly. You are all held in high honour by the king and especially so by Rama. So, as your, mouthpiece, I shall go back and inform the king of the cause of my return and on your behalf, enquire of him, his welfare." Saying thus, the knower of the Puranas approached the gates of the inner apartments. Sumantra entered the apartments which were always closed and having entered he began to praise the royal line of the king. He then entered the bed-room of the king and approaching the bed he stayed behind a screen and from there began to praise the king with sweet words

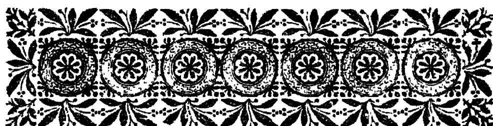
full of blessings. "Oh Kakutstha, may the Sun and the Moon, Siva and Kubera, Varuna, Agni and Indra, may all bless thee with success. The glorious night has passed and the auspicious day has dawned. May you rise up, O tiger among kings and do the needful. Brahmins and captains of the army and merchants have all arrived, O king. They are all anxious to see you and hence, arise O Raghava." Hearing the charioteer Sumantra, the knower of mantras praise him thus, the King awoke and spoke these words. 'This lady told you to go and fetch Rama. What is the cause for not having done so? Why do you go counter to my order? I am not asleep. Bring here Rama quickly.' Thus did the king order the charioteer again. Hearing those royal words the charioteer bowed with his head and went out of the royal abode, full of thoughts of joy. He reached the royal street, gay with banners and buntings and exceedinglydelighted and joyous, the charioteer sped quickly beholding them all. The charioteer hearing every one on his way talking of Rama and of the installation

which gave joy to all the people. Then he saw at a distance the lovely palace of Rama bright as the peak of mount Kailasa resembling the abode of Lord Indra with huge gates, beautiful with hundreds of balconies, with a golden statue for its sole crest, lovely with gems and corals, bright as the autumnal clouds and resembling the cave of mount Meru, adorned with large festoons of excellent gems, flashing with pearls and jewels, fragrant with the scent of sandal and agaru, emitting sweet and odorous scents like the peak of mount Dardar, resounding the sweet tones of swans and peacocks with tastefully sculptured wolves and deer attracting the eye and the heart alike of all creatures with its resplendant lustre, bright as the moon and the sun, resembling the abode of Kubera, the peer of the palace of Mahendra and full of various kinds of birds. The charioteer beheld the palace of Rama, high as the peak of Meru, surrounded with numerous people who had come there with folded hands. He saw it beautified with a number of villagers who had assembled there with gifts, eager to witness the installation

of Rama. He saw the palace that resembled a mighty cloud, that looked magnificent with its lovely decorations, that flashed bright with different gems and that was full of servants of various kinds. The charioteer, borne in his chariot by fleet coursers, beheld the royal abode and the people's clamour and gladdened the hearts of all townsmen with his escort which headed towards the palace of Rama. Reaching the highly wealthy abode of Rama, intensely charming on account of the sweet and melodious notes of the deer and the peacocks, just as in the exquisitely beautiful palace of Indra, the charioteer became wonder-struck so much so that the hairs on his body stood on end. Entering various well-decorated enclosures, bright as Kailasa and resembling the abode of the gods, he saw a number of faithful men awaiting the pleasure of Rama, and passing through them the charioteer entered the innermost courtyard. He there heard the joyous notes of the people assembled for the installation of Rama and found the voice of all the people directed towards the welfare of the son of the Lord of men. Sumantra beheld the lovely palace of Rama, full of animals and

birds like the abode of Indra with its high dome shining lustrously like the peak of Meru. He beheld the gateway crowded with millions and billions of people, both townsmen and villagers, who, leaving their carriages far away, had approached the palace with folded hands and presents. He then saw the lovely elephant named Satrunjaya stationed there to convey Rama. The elephant was huge in proportions resembling a mountain in the midst of mighty clouds and was rutted and hence quite uncontrollable and unbearable. He also saw hundreds of ministers well-adorned who were all dear to the king waiting with horses, chariots and elephants. Passing through them all the charioteer entered the prosperous inner apartments. The charioteer entered unhindered the crowded palace with its lofty and splendid dome resembling the clouds that repose on the top of a hill just like the dolphin entering the ocean full of jewels.





CANTO XVI.



PASSING through the crowded door of the inner apartments, Sumantra, skilled in ancient lore, reached the private apartments which stood apart from the rest. There, youthful warriors whose ears were ringed with polished gold and who were all armed with trusty bows and darts, watched with devoted eyes and heart. He saw there, stationed at the gate, several aged men well-dressed and holding staves of cane, wearing orange-coloured robes and faithfully guarding the ladies. When they saw the approach of Sumantra, they, eager to wish the good of Rama, rose up immediately from their seats in confusion. Then the skilled and modest charioteer spoke to

them thus,—"Inform Rama quickly that Sumantra stands at the gate." Those men seeking always the pleasure of their lord, approached Rama speedily and communicated the news to him who was with his wife. Knowing that the charioteer has arrived with the commands of his father, he asked him to be brought there itself, eager to obey his paternal will. The Charioteer beheld Rama seated on a golden sofa, upholstered finely, well-arrayed and bright like Lord Kubera. His body was covered all over with pure and fragrant sandal resembling in its colour the blood of a boar. By his side sat Sita with a chowri in her hand, like Chitra by the side of the Moon. Then Sumantra, skilled in court etiquette, humbly saluted the bounteous prince, who was dazzling like the Sun bright with his own lustre. With folded hands Sumantra, the adored of the kings, enquired of his welfare and spoke thus to the prince who was seated in the pleasure-bed. "O Rama, the happy son of Kausalya, your father, in company with the queen Kaikeyi, desires to see you. Therefore be you pleased to go there-

quickly." Well pleased at being addressed thus, the highly effulgent lion among men duly honoured his father's words and told thus, to Sita. "Oh lady, there is no doubt that my father is consulting with my mother Kaikeyi about something connected with the installation. Guessing at the intentions of the king the clever queen, O lady of bewitching eyes, eager to gratify the desires of her lord, is urging the monarch on my behalf. That mother of mine, the daughter of the lord of the Kekayas, is interested in my prosperity and with great delight acts up to my good and follows the desires of the king. Fortunately indeed did the Maharaja and his beloved queen despatch as messenger this Sumantra who always works in my interests. The messenger who has arrived here is worthy of the people that sent him. Certain it is that the king would install me on the throne of Yuvaraja this very day. I shall quickly go hence and see the lord of the earth. Meanwhile please yourself among your followers and be at ease. Thus spoken to with regard by her lord, Sita of fair dark eyes followed her husband to the gateway and implored

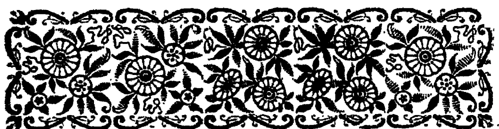
blessings on him. May the King bestow on you the kingdom which is the delight of the twice-born and install you with due rights in royal state just as Brahma, the maker of the world, installed Indra. Beholding you coupled with Diksha and Vrata, dressed in pure black deer's skin, wearing the roebuck's horn on the hand, I shall adore you. May the wielder of the thunderbolt guard you in the East. May Yama protect you in the South, May Varuna watch the Western quarter and the Lord Kubera take care of the North. Then, bidding farewell to Sita, Rama, having completed all auspicious preliminaries, went out of his abode in company with Sumantra just like a lion emerging out of the deep cave of a mountain. He saw at the gate Lakshmana standing reverently with folded hands. Then he reached the central court-yard and mixed freely with his friends. To all his well-wishers whowere assembled there he gave kind looks and fair greetings and then that joy of monarchs and tiger among men ascended the lofty silver car with its seat of tiger skin, high as the mountain. With cloudlike thunder as it rolled it flashed with gems and burnished gold,

dazzling the sight by the brilliance of the shining gold. Like youthful elephants, excellent and quick horses led the car like the faultless chariot of Indra, the thousand-eyed. Ascending the car in great haste the glorious Raghava went out of his abode like the lustrous Moon from the midst of dense clouds and like Parjanya when he flies thundering through the autumn skies. Lakshmana the younger brother of Raghava, with chowri in hand, got into the car behind Rama and watched him with fraternal care. As he emerged through the gates the tumult of the assembled crowd rose all around and people acclaimed him with loud huzza and jubilant shout. Then elephants which resembled huge mountains and steeds which surpassed all their kind followed Rama by hundreds, nay by thousands. Before him marched a band of trained warriors, well-armed with swords and bows, coloured with sandal and agaru and each one glowing with hope. Throughout the way were heard the sounds of musical instruments the panegyrics of the bards and leonine shouts of the warriors. The repressor of foes proceeded

along while there showered on him numberless fragrant flowers from the hands of the well-adorned ladies occupying the terraces and the lattices. Then all the ladies of fearless face and limb, eager to please Rama, greeted him with shrill and sweet voices from palace high and crowded street. Surely shall your mother Kausalya rejoice now, O Joy of the mother, to behold you on your triumphal march to obtain the kingdom of your ancestors. Those ladies considered lady Sita who was heartily loved by Rama as the best of all woman-kind. Surely some mighty penance was performed, in days of yore, by that lady who is now united to Rama just like Rohini to the Moon. Thus did that best of men Rama hear on the way the pleasing words uttered by the ladies from the tops of the palaces. Rama wended his way along the high road, hearing from the assembled people all round praises of himself. The joyous citizens, spoke variously regarding Rama. 'This Rama shall this day attain the kingdom by the grace of our king. We have thus gained all our desires, now that he is to become our ruler. It is a great

gain to the world that he is obtaining the kingdom for a long time. He will be never unkind to the people nor will he see them suffering.' He marched triumphantly like the lord of wealth, praised all round by excellent bards, with music, horses and elephants and panegyrists proceeding in front. Rama beheld in that lovely highroad crowds of horses and chariots and elephants and all the cross roads full of people and the shops displaying a wealth of gems.





CANTO XVII.



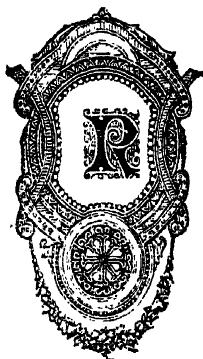
AMA ascended his car after having rendered his friends joyful and beheld the illustrious town adorned with pennons and flags and fragrant with the incense of the agaru wood and tumultuous with crowds from various directions. He traversed the royal road on either side of which rose high palaces that vied with pale clouds. The royal road was splendidly spacious and brilliant with a collection of sandal, agaru and other exceedingly fine scents with silk and flaxen cloths with whole pearls and excellent crystals. He saw the royal road just like the celestial road, surrounded with different kinds of bazaars and multiform edibles, rice offerings, fried rice, incense of agaru and sandal and different kinds of sweet-

smelling flowers. Listening to the numerous benedictions uttered by the friends and having duly honoured all the people he went his way. The people said "Installed in the gadi today may you follow the paths trodden by your grandfathers and great-grandfathers and protect us. May you endear us just as your fathers and grandfathers did of old. When Rama becomes the king we shall surely live more happily. Enough of the enjoyments we have had, enough of the supereme goal for us, if we but just see the budding Rama established in the kingdom. Nothing else is dearer to us than the installation of Rama of untold splendour in the kingdom." Hearing these and other such pleasant words in his praise from his friends, Rama went on the highway without being moved. Raghava passed away but not a single person could withdraw his eyes or thought from that best of men. He who did not see Rama and whom Rama did not behold was an object of contempt for all the people and he reproached himself in bitter shame. That righteous soul showed sympathy and tenderness to all the castes alike as also to men of all the four stages. Hence

they also bore him great love. That son of the monarch bent his circling course around the crossways, roads leading to temples, the altars and the abodes of gods. Approaching the royal palace resembling a mass of clouds, auspicious with its numerous turrets high as the Kailasa peak covering as it were the sky with its white domes and with its magnificent halls adorned with numerous gems. He entered that excellent abode which may be likened to that of the great Indra. Shining in splendour the prince entered his father's abode and drove his chariot through three courts guarded by bowmen. That excellent of men then passed though two more Courts on foot and having passed through all the enclosures, the royal son of Dasaratha turned back his followers and himself entered the inner most apartments. When the monarch's noble son had thus gone to meet his father, the multitude, elate with joy, stood watching in the street eagerly expecting his return just like the sea, the lord of rivers, awaits the rise of the Moon.



CANTO XVIII.



AMA saw his father seated with Kaikeyi on a handsome couch with a dried-up countenance and a dejected look. First of all he respectfully bowed at the feet of his father and with all attention bowed at the feet of Kaikeyi. The miserable King with his eyes bedimmed with tears just uttered the word Rama and could do no more. He was able neither to see him nor to talk to him. Beholding the strange and terrible appearance of the King, Rama also got frightened as one who has trod on a snake. He beheld the mighty monarch breathing hard, with his senses dejected and mind bewildered, a prey to torturing grief,

agitated like the deep tranquil wave-crested ocean and clouded like the Sun during the eclipse and distraught like a Rishi who had uttered a falsehood. At the sight of this inexplicable grief of his father, Rama became considerably agitated just like the ocean during the course of the full moon. Ever bent on what is good to his father, Rama then considered within himself:—"How strange it is, the King does not joyfully welcome me to-day. Usually even on occasions when he was enraged my father used to beam with pleasure at my sight. Such being the case, seeing me now why does anguish ring his brow." Sick and perplexed and distraught with woe, Rama bowed again to Kaikeyi and spoke thus:—"What wrong has been unwittingly committed by me which enraged my father? Kindly apprise me of it and yourself appease him on my behalf. Why is his mind now bewildered? He who used always to be fond towards me is now miserable and pale and does not speak to me. I hope no bodily pain or mental anguish troubles him. Ah! uniform happiness is indeed very rare. Or has any evil befallen

the lovely prince Bharata or the mighty brave Satrughna or my mothers? Displeasing the King and disregarding the paternal injunctions I do not wish to live even for an hour when the King is offended. How should a man behave to him who gave him his being. The sire to whom he owes his birth should be his visible god on earth; or perhaps have you spoken any harsh words to my father out of anger or conceit, which has thus agitated his mind? Speak truly, Oh queen, to me who am eager to know what has caused this unusual change in the lord of men. Thus addressed by the noble Raghava Kaikeyi casting all ruth and shame aside spoke these impudent words full of self-greed—

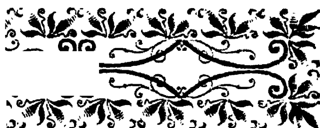
"Oh Rama, The King is not angry nor has any misery befallen him. He has got something in his mind which he dares not speak for fear of thee. Thou art so dear to him that his lips refrain from words that might pain you. But you must perforce do that which he has promised to me. He honoured me high in days of yore and vouchsafed a boon to me. But now this King regrets his word just like a common folk. The lord of

earth vowed to grant a boon to me saying 'I give thee' and now he wishes in vain to set up a dam when the water has passed away. Oh Rama, it is well known to all righetous people that truth is the root of all virtue; therefore the King should not abondon truth on your behalf though enraged at me. If you fulfill your father's words, be they good or be they ill, I will then relate to you everything in detail. If you undertake that the King's vow shall not go in vain with you, that is, if you bind yourself by your father's vow then and not till then shall I unfold the tale. The King will not speak to you." Hearing these words uttered by Kaikeyi, Rama with a troubled heart spoke these words to the queen in the presence of the King. "Ah me! dear lady, it does not behove you to speak such words to me. At the bidding of the King I would even fall into the Fire; I would even drink virulent poison or drown myself in the Ocean, provided I am asked to do it by him who is bent on my welfare and who is my guru, father and King in one. So tell me, O lady, what is desired of me by the King. I will do it and I promise

to do it. Rama does not speak twice." Then the wicked Kaikeyi spoke these terribly cruel words to Rama who loved the right and spoke the truth. In days of yore, Oh Raghava, during the battle between Devas and Asuras two boons were granted to me by your father on account of my having protected him from the wounds of shafts in that terrific fight. I now claim of the King these two ancient boons namely the installation of Bharata and your immediate departure to the forest of Dandaka. Now Rama, if you wish to make your father stick to truth and maintain also your own truth and honour clear, then, O best of men, hear these words of mine. Obey the commands of your father and in accordance with his pledge to me you have to go into the forest for nine years and five. With all the materials collected by the King for your installation, let Bharata be installed, Oh Raghava. Resigning this installation you shall reside in the Dandaka forest for twice seven years with matted hair and skin-garments. In the city of Kosalas let Bharata govern this world full of different kinds of treasures, horses, chariots and elephants.

Hence only this King, filled with pity, is unable even to look at you, his countenance being afflicted with grief. Do you, O joy of the Raghus, act up to the words of the King and by thus nobly making them true, O Rama save the lord of men." While thus she spoke these cruel words, Rama did not betray any grief but the noble King was greatly pained at the thought of the misery of his son.



CANTO XIX.



ALM and unmoved on hearing the unpleasant and murderous words of Kaikeyi Rama did not give way to grief but replied to her as follows—"Let it be so. I shall repair from here to the forest to live there with matted locks and skinned garments in order to carry out the promise of the king but I wish to know this thing. Why does the irrepressible lord of the earth, the destroyer of foes, not welcome me today as usual? Do not get angry Oh lady, I tell thee to thy face that I will repair to the forest wearing barks and matted hair. Be thou pleased. What is there that is good which I would not perform with absolute confidence when commanded thereto by him who is my well-

wisher, guru, father and grateful sovereign too. Only one pang consumes my breast, that his own lips have not expressed his desire to instal Bharata. I would gladly and promptly give to Bharata of my own accord my wife Sita, my realm, my wealth, yea even my own dear life. Such being the case, what doubt is there when it is urged on by my own father, the lord of men and when it is in pursuance of his vow and in pleasant satisfaction of yourself. Therefore do you console him. Why is it that the lord of earth with his eyes fixed on the ground slowly sheds tears? Let messengers go quick on swift horses to fetch Bharata immediately from Bharata's house by command of the King. Without questioning my father's words I will proceed from here to the forest of Dandaka for fourteen years.' Hearing those words of Rama, Kaikeyi became pleased and confident in his departure hurried on Raghava. "Let it be so. Messengers shall proceed quickly on fast speeding horses to fetch Bharata from his uncle's house. I do not think it proper for you, Oh Rama, to linger when you are so anxious. Hence it behoves

you to depart quickly to the forest. That the king does not personally speak to you is due to his being cast down with shame. There is nothing more than that, Oh best of men. Let his distress be dispelled. So long as you do not make haste and go out of this city to the forest, your father, Oh Rama, shall neither bathe nor take meals." Sobbing hard with the words 'Alas what misery' the King, immersed in grief, fell senseless on the couch that was adorned with gold. Raising up the King, Rama, goaded by Kaikeyi like a horse struck by the whip, made haste to go to the forest. Hearing those unpleasant, ignoble and fierce words of the wicked Kaikeyi, Rama with an appeased mind spoke to her as follows " I am not eager to live in this world, O lady, hankering after wealth. Know me to be equal to the sages, solely and firmly established in virtue. Therefore if it is in my power to do anything to please my father it shall be certainly done by all means even by the sacrifice of my life. There is no greater virtue or one more paramount than service to one's father or obedience to his words. Though he has not spoken to me

personally, I will, in accordance with your will, live in the lonely forest for fourteen years. Certain it is, O Kaikeyi, that you do not consider me to possess any Kind of virtue, since you have requisitioned the King for this—you whom I consider as more than my God. Excuse me till I take leave of my mother and comfort Sita. I will immediately go to the mighty forest of Dandaka. It is your duty, O lady, to arrange in such a way that Bharata may rule the kingdom and also serve his father. Such is the eternal Dharma." Hearing these words of Rama, his father was greatly afflicted and unable to speak on account of choking grief, he wept aloud. Worshipping the feet of his father who lay insensible as also of her who was undeserving of honour, the highly effulgent Rama went out. Rama faced round his father and Kaikeyi with revered steps and coming out of the inner apartments met his friends. Closely following him came Lakshmana, the enhancer of the joy of Sumitra, highly enraged and with eyes full of tears. Reverently going round the vessel containing the installation water, Rama proceeded slowly without

directing his eye towards it. The loss of the kingdom could not dim the glory that encompassed him who was the most beloved of all his people. The very love made him retain the sweet splendour just like the moon in the time of wane. For one who was about to exile himself into the forest and abandon the lordship of the earth no change of feeling was observed as though he spurned all the world like one emancipated. Casting aside the auspicious umbrella and the well-adorned chouries, leaving behind him people, chariot and the townsmen likewise, inwardly bearing his grief and controlling his senses, the self-controlled Rama entered his mother's mansion in order to appraise her of the unpleasant news. The gay-clad people there who flocked round Rama true and fair cannot trace one sign of altered fortune upon the splendid hero's face. That self-controlled hero of mighty arms did not forsake his innate cheerfulness like the autumnal moon which throws a splendour all its own. With his sweet voice, Rama spoke saluting all the assembled people and then the righteous and the illustrious Rama entered his mother's

mansion. Lakshmana the brave who was his brother's peer in princely virtues followed close to his brother inwardly controlling his grief. Thus went Rama to the palace where all were gay with hope and joy. But he knew well the dire event that would mar the hope and destroy the bliss. Lest it should bring the self-destruction of his friends, Rama did not yield to his grief and exhibit any change of countenance.





CANTO XX.



UT in the apartments of the monarch's palace when that tiger among men emerged out with folded hands, a mighty wail and a weeping lament went up from the mourning women. "Ah! he who ever freely did his duty ere his sire could bid, he who was our mainstay and refuge, that Rama goes this day an exile hence. Ever since his birth Raghava attends on us as much as he does on Kausalya. Even when cursed, he does not get angry, carefully avoiding anything that excites anger. He soothes the angry and heals offence. He goes today an exile hence. Our King is most unwise since in his folly he casts away Raghava who is the

mainstay of the whole world." Thus in their woe, like kine bereaved of their young calves, the queens of Dasaratha assailed the King with keen reproach and wept aloud. Their loud lamentations mixed with tears smote with new grief the monarch who was already afflicted with his son's separation and made him fall on his couch and faint there.

Then the self-controlled Rama, highly smitten with pain which his heaving heart could scarce restrain, groaned like an elephant and went with his brother into the apartments of his mother. He beheld there an old and venerable man sitting at the gate besides many others stationed around. On beholding Rama they all sprang to their feet swiftly and hailed Rama the pre-eminent of victor-chiefs with loud acclamations. Passing the first court, Rama beheld in the second many aged Brahmins learned in the Vedas and honoured by the King. Having bowed to these elderly people Rama passed on and saw in the third Court women young and old eager in guarding the doors. On beholding Rama those female warders became joyful and hastened inside to inform Rama's mother

of the pleasant news. After having spent the whole night in meditation Kausalya was in the early morning just performing the puja to Vishnu desirous of the welfare of her son. Clad in white silk, cheerful, accustomed to daily fasts and ceremonies the auspicious Kausalya was just then offering oblations to the fire in accordance with the mantras Just then Rama entered the splendid inner apartments of his mother and beheld her offering oblations to the fire. The joy of the Raghus saw also collected there, for the purpose of worshipping the Devas, curd, *akshata*, ghee, sweetmeats, oblations, fried grains, garlands, fresh butter, *payasa, krisara*, fuel and jars full of water. He saw his mother bright as the devas clad in white silk and worn with many a fast, engaged in pleasing the goddess with offerings of water. So long away she flew to meet gladly the darling of her soul just like a mare that runs back eagerly to welcome her foal. Seeing her mother approach him, the virtuous Raghava supported her and embraced her. Having embraced him and kissed him on the forehead Kausalya, out of her fondness

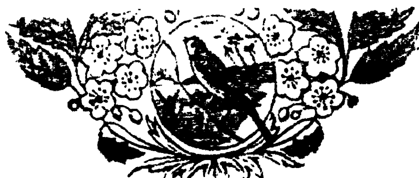
to her son, spoke these pleasant and salutory words to her son, the irrepressible Raghava. "May you possess the long life and fame of the old, virtuous and noble Rajarishis, your ancestors, and may you also possess virtue worthy of thy line. Behold your father, O Raghava, true to his promise. The virtuous king shall this very day instal you as the Yuvaraja." Rama took the proferred seat and when pressed to partake of refreshments the naturally modest Raghava, bowed down out of respect to his mother, spoke to her with folded hands and touched with shame. He began to relate to her the story of his going to the Dandaka forest. "Oh lady, evidently you are not aware of the great calamity that is impending on me. It is sure to be the cause of much grief to yourself, Vaidehi and Lakshmana. I am going to the Dandaka forest. What is the use of this seat to me. The time has approached when seats of kusa grass only are fit for me. I am to live in the lonely forests for fourteen years just like a hermit, giving up flesh and living on honey, roots and fruits. The king confers on Bharata the dignity of Yuvaraja

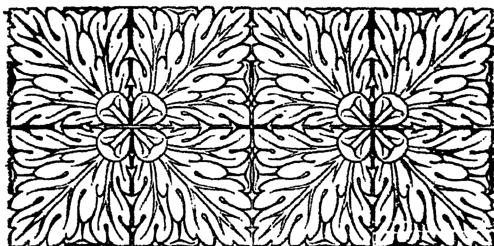
but sends poor me away an exile to the Dandaka forest and I have to live in that unpeopled wood for six years and eight, following the footsteps of the foresters and subsisting by fruits and roots." Like the Sala wood cut asunder by the axe in the forest, like a goddess fallen from the heavens, the queen dropped down suddenly (on hearing the words of Rama). Seeing his mother who was quite undeserving of grief fallen down like a plantain tree quite insensible, Rama lifted her up. With his hands Rama smoothed her body which was covered with dust on account of her having rolled on the ground in her distress like a mare when weighted with burden. Seeing Raghava seated by her side, the highly distressed Kausalya who was deserving of happiness, spoke thus to the tiger among men in the hearing of Lakshmana. "Oh dear son. Raghava, If you had never been born, it would have brought me grief, but in my childless state, I would not have experienced so much grief as I do now. To the childless wife there clings only one mental grief namely, the grief that 'I am childless.' No second

misery prompts this misery O child. When long I sought, alas, in vain, to gain my husband's love and bliss, I set all my hopes on my son O Rama, and dreamed I might be happy yet. Being the first and best of all the queens I shall have to hear several unpleasant and heart-rending words from my co-wives who are all inferior and younger than myself. What greater misery can befall a woman than this—my endless grief and lamentation. Even while you are near I am thus scorned and rejected. What need I say, O child, when you are exiled. Certainly it is my death. Always disregarded by my husband I have been greatly insulted.—I am treated as equal or even inferior to the followers of Kaikeyi. Whoever now serves me or even follows me, even they will not speak to me when they find the son of Kaikeyi installed. Kaikeyi is always of fretful temper and how shall I, reduced to misery, be able to behold her face when she utters harsh words. For ten years and seven since you were born, I sat and watched forlorn hoping to reach some day the end of my grief: But now comes this endless and

undiminishing misery which I cannot bear long. Though much worn out Oh Raghava, I cannot endure the insults of my co-wives without being cheered by the sight of your face which is bright as the full moon. How shall I pass in dark distress my long lone days of wretchedness. With fasts and vows and-all kinds of difficulties you were brought up by my unfortunate self with great care. All these efforts have now become useless by this sad plight of yours. Hard, hard, I wean, must be this heart to bear this blow without bursting apart, just like some great river bank when, during the rainy season it comes in contact with the freshes. Certain it is that there is no death for me, nor do the halls of Yama vouchsafe room for me; otherwise why does not Death take me away at once like the lion dragging the weeping deer. Certain it is that my heart is hard being wrought of steel, since it neither breaks nor is my body shattered to pieces on the ground, as a result of this grief. Surely there is no death for me before my time. But this alone grieves me very much that all my fasts and gifts and restraints and

penances performed on behalf of my son have become fruitless, just like the seeds sown on a barren soil. If it is possible for one distressed with terrible grief to obtain at his will death before his time, I would, bereft of you, have gone this very day to the abode of the dead like a cow bereft of its offspring. What for do I live here uselessly without you, Oh you with countenance bright as the moon! I shall follow you to the forest like an extremely feeble cow following its calf out of affection." Beholding Raghava and hearing of the terrible calamity that had overtaken him, Kausalya, sore afflicted with distress and uncontrollable grief, then cried much just like a kinnari at the sight of the captivity of its young one.





CANTO XXI.



LAKSHMANA, the distressed, spoke these timely words to the mother of Rama, Kausalya, who was thus weeping:—"Oh honoured lady, It does not please me either, that, in obedience to the words of a woman, Rama should quit his royal state and betake himself to the forest. The King is changed, aged and is addicted to worldly enjoyments. What will not such a

king say when goaded under the influence of love. I do not find any such fault or sin in Rama that he should be banished from the kingdom as an exile to the forest. I do not find a single individual in the whole of this world, who, whether he be an outcaste or a bitter foe, would talk ill of him even behind his back. Observing what law of righteousness does the monarch renounce such a son who is godlike, straightforward, well-disciplined and beloved of even the enemies? Remembering the conduct of the King, which son will take to heart the words of the King uttered in his second childhood. Come, Rama, ere anything of this plot be known to the people, stand by me and secure the government of the Kingdom to yourself. Who is there able to do anything, Oh Raghava, when like Yama himself, I stand by your side, bow in hand, protecting you? If there is any undesirable element here, I shall, Oh bull among men, lay the whole of Ayodhya desolate with my sharp arrows. I shall destroy all who stand by Bharata or wish him well, for, gentle patience earns contempt. If encouraged by Kaikeyi, the wicked King,

our father, turns out to be our foe, he shall be bound without mercy and slain unhesitatingly. Even a guru is fit to be chastised when, puffed with pride and without discerning right and wrong, he begins to stray in forbidden paths. Tell me, Oh best of men, by what law of force or of reason does he purpose to confer on Kaikeyi this Empire which justly devolves on you. Having made us his worst enemies, what power has he, Oh destroyer of foes, to grant the kingdom to Bharata? Oh lady, In truth I am deeply attached at heart to my brother. By truth and my bow, by gifts and my prayers, I swear that if Rama enters the blazing fire or the forest, know me to enter there first and foremost. I shall surely dispel this fierce grief of yourself just like the rising Sun dispels darkness. May the lady as well as Raghava behold my prowess. I will kill my aged father, the vassal of Kaikeyi's will, old, yet a child, the woman's thrall, infirm and base, the scorn of all." Hearing these words of the noble Lakshmana, Kausalya, crying out of grief, spoke thus to Rama :—" You have now heard the words of your brother

Lakshmana. If it pleases you, Oh son, do the thing his words advise. Following the wicked words of my rival wife, it does not behove you to betake yourself to the forest leaving me here grief-stricken. If you wish to stay in Dharma, Oh knower of Dharma, if you desire to follow in the footsteps of righteousness, then stay here and serve me and thus follow the path of highest virtue. Kasyapa stayed as a rule in his house serving his mother and coupled with this highest penance he attained heaven. I am as much entitled to your veneration and regard as the King is. I do not give you permission and so you are not to go to the forest from here. Separated from you I have no use either for my life or for its pleasures. Far more desirable is even the eating of grass if you are by my side. If you go to the forest leaving me here grief-stricken, I shall fast here and shall not be able to sustain my life. The consequence will be you will attain O son, the world-detested hell just like the ocean, the lord of rivers, which suffered for unrighteousness as in Brahminicide." While his mother, the poor Kausalya was bewailing

thus, the virtuous Rama uttered these words of righteousness. "I have no power to transgress my father's words. I entreat you with bent head O lady. I wish to go to the forest. The learned Rishi Kandu who knew Dharma and was steadfast in virtue killed a cow in days of yore in obedience to his father's commands. Even among our ancestors, in accordance with the commands of their father Sagara, the Sagaras dug the earth and thereby courted terrible destruction. Further, Rama the son of Jamadagni, in obedience to his father's words cut asunder in the forest his own mother Renuka with his axe. Thus O lady, these and several others who are equal to celestials have kept up the words of their fathers and have made them true. Similarly I shall also do what is dear to the father. Do not think that in following the commands of my father I am alone: these people O lady, whom I have mentioned already have acted likewise. I am not introducing any new Dharma which is against your wishes. I am merely journeying on the road chalked out and traversed by the Great of yore. Surely shall

I perform that which is worthy of being performed in this world and nothing else. None indeed who obeys his father's commands comes to grief or degradation." Having thus spoken to his mother, the best of speakers and the most excellent of all bowmen spoke again these words to Lakshmana—"I know, Oh Lakshmana, what love for me you have, what firm devotion unsurpassed. Your valour and your worth I know, as also the glory that appals the foe. Unequalled is the mighty grief of my mother, Oh you of auspicious marks, since she is not aware of the significance of truth and patience. Dharma is indeed supreme in the world and truth is firmly established in Dharma These noble words of my father are in accordance with dharma. Having heard the commands of his father, mother or a brahmin, he who abides by dharma should never make them vain, Oh hero. Hence I am unable to transgress the injunctions of my father. Kaikeyi it was who urged me, but it was, Oh hero, in accordance with the words of my father. Do you therefore cast aside these unholy thoughts

which smack of war and warrior's pride. Abide by dharma and not fierceness. Let my advice be followed." Having spoken thus out of affection to his brother Lakshmana, Rama spoke again to Kausalya with bent head and folded hands. "Pray permit me O lady, to go from here to the forest. I swear by my life, pray, offer me your blessings. When the promised years are over I shall again return to the town from the forest just like the royal saint Yayati of old who having once left it, again returned to the heavens. Let your grief be controlled O mother, let not your heart be wrung in pain. I shall surely return here from the forest after making good my father's words. Yourself, myself, Vaidehi, Lakshmana and Sumitra all of us are bound to obey the commands of father. This is the eternal Dharma. Therefore O mother, desist from these preparations (for the installation), control the grief in your heart and follow my virtuous decision to dwell in the forest." Hearing these calm and unmoved words of high wisdom and virtue, Rama's mother, the queen Kausalya, regained her senses as

from the dead, looked on her son Rama and replied thus—" Both by right and love I am O son, as much your eldar as your father. I do not give you permission. It does not behove you to go to the forest leaving me here thus pining with terrible grief. What use is life to me here without you? Of what avail my relations or my offerings or the immortal nectar? More dear, my son, one hour with thee than all the world where thou art not." Hearing these piteous wailings of his mother, Rama again blazed forth just like a mighty elephant that enters the open forest driven thereto by the blazing torches of the hunters. Steadfast in dharma he spoke these virtuous words, as he alone was fit to speak them on that occasion, to his mother who was lying half insensible and to the son of Sumitra who was consumed with heartfelt pain. "I always knew O Lakshmana your steadfast devotion to me and your valour. Without knowing well my mind, you now pain me much in company with my mother. Oh child, dharma, artha and kama are indeed highly esteemed in this world as the three objects of life and they are

manifested, I am sure, at the appearance of the fruits of dharma just like a wife dear and obedient, having a son. Where all the three are not found in combination we must commence that from which proceeds dharma. He who is bent on artha (wealth) is indeed spurned by the world nor is he admired who is intent on kama (pleasures). Who is there by nature not wicked who shall not, perceiving the path of righteousness, obey the behests of his guru, king, father and elder, be they the outcome of anger or joy or passion? Hence it is I am unable to break this vow of my father. He is indeed Oh child, our guru who can command us both. He is also the husband of the queen and her refuge and her ideal of righteousness. When he the righteous king is still living, especially when he is still following the path of his duty, how can the queen, like some poor insignificant widow, go forth from here with me. Do you permit me therefore, Oh queen, to go to the forest. Pray perform the benedictory ceremonies so that on completion of the period I shall again return just like the truthful Yayati of old. I do not wish to thrust behind

glorified renown for the sake of mere kingdom. In this life of short duration Oh queen, I do not wish for this nether earth by unrighteous means." That bull among men thus soothed his mother and eager to go to the Dandaka forest, instructed well his younger brother in the mysteries of dharma and mentally went round his mother.





CANTO XXII.



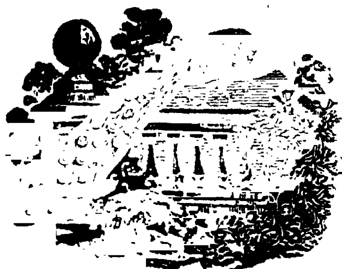
RESERVING his equanimity of mind with fortitude, the self-controlled Rama then approached his affectionate brother and friend, the son of Sumitra who was distressed with grief and considerably agitated, indignant and panting like a snake, and whose glaring eyes burned with fury and spoke to him thus—" Subduing your anger and grief, have recourse solely to the laws of virtue. Brook this insult and resort to joy. Whatever has been commenced here in futherance of my installation to-day please abandon all of them and do quickly the things that have to be done and that would be useful now. Oh Lakshmana whatever colle-

ction of meterials and other preparations have been made for the purpose of my installation let all those be turned towards sending me away from the installation. She whose mind grieves on account of my installation, let that mother be appeased. You had better act in such a way that she may be pacified. I could not endure to neglect even for one hour Oh Lakshmana, this grief that has arisen in her mind out of anxiety. I do not remember to have ever done either wittingly or unwittingly, any act, however slight, which is distasteful to my father or mothers. Truthful, revelling in truth, and ever having truth as his valour, my father is afraid of the next world. Let him dismiss such fears. If these preparations be not now stopped, my father will be pained at heart thinking that truth is not kept up and his pain will pain me also. Therefore it is Oh Lakshmana, that I wish to stop all these preparations for the installation and to repair immediately to the forest from here. By my exile today Oh prince, Kaikeyi will become gratified and will then commence the installation of her son Bharata. When I put on the bark and

skin garments and repair to the forest wearing locks of matted hair, Kaikeyi will attain ease of mind. It does not behove me to offend Him who has inspired this thought in Kaikeyi and has kept her mind firm in it. Therefore I shall go into exile without delay. Fate's hand is clearly seen Oh Lakshmana, in my being thus sent away and Fate alone is responsible for the transfer of the kingdom to other hands as also for its return. How could Kaikeyi's purpose bring on me this pain and suffering were not her change of heart decreed by divine Fate. You know well, Oh lovely Lakshmana, that I knew no difference among my mothers and likewise Kaikeyi also did not ere this show any partiality towards me or her son. Hence these cruel and shameful words of hers intended to stop the installation and send me into exile, I could not reconcile except by the intervention of Fate. Otherwise how could she, a princess, endowed naturally with riches and with such noble qualities speak in her lord's presence such distressing words to me like an ordinary woman. But Fate, which none may comprehend and which no creature-

could avert, has shown its power over her and me and has upset all arrangements What man, Oh son of Sumitra, dares to contend with Fate's resistless sway whose all-commanding power our former deeds alone can bind. Our life and death, our joy and pain, anger and fear and loss and gain each thing that is in every state, all is the work surely of Fate Even saints inspired with rigid penance, when once they feel the stroke of Fate, do no more engage in sternest vows, but fall enslaved by love and rage. So now the sudden stroke which has put a stop to the completion of the work undertaken and to the origination of an entirely unthought of event in its stead is surely the action of Fate. Weigh this true counsel in thy soul and with firmness control thy heart. Then there will be no grief even at the stoppage of my installation. Assuaging thus your grief and following my words you had better desist quickly from the preparations for the installation. With all these very jars filled with water collected here for the installation Oh Lakshmana, shall be performed the bath preparatory to my taking the hermit's

vow, or else what need have I for these royal materials? Water drawn with my own hands shall do for the vow I take nor do you, Oh Lakshmana, grieve for the turn of the tide of fortune Between the kingdom and the exile to the forest, the exile to the forest is more glorious. Do not, Oh Lakshmana, blame our younger mother in the matter of the stoppage of this installation. She talks unpleasantly because she is urged thereto by Fate and Fate, you know, is all-powerful"



CANTO XXIII.



LAKSHMANA, when he was thus addressed by Rama, drooped his head and on hearing the whole discourse attained a state of mind which was as it were midway between grief and joy. That bull among men, then contracted his eyebrows in a frown of anger and like a mighty serpent in his hole, he breathed fierce and fast in great wrath. His eyes glanced around so fiercely that none could brook his glare and this, coupled with the threatening brows so darkly frowned, made his face resemble that of an infuriated lion. Like the trunk of an elephant he often raised and shook his hand aloft: now turned his neck to left and right,

now bent, now raised its stately height. With an awry sidelong glance he eyed his brother and replied to him thus—"Thy rash resolve, thy eager haste, and thy mighty fear are all misplaced. There is no occasion here for transgression of dharma, no cause to dread the people's blame. Can one so brave as yourself consent to use a coward's argument? Can the glory of warrior race debase himself with such craven speech? Can one like thee exalt Fate which is admittedly powerless and weak? How can you, undoubting still, restrain your suspicions of that sinful couple namely Dasaratha and Kaikeyi? Can you fail to know, Oh most dutious one, that their hearts are set on duty's show? With a desire to renounce thee by fraud they simulate virtuous conduct which is nothing but selfishness. Had they not already agreed long ago, Oh Rama, on this treacherous deed, that promised boon which is now trotted out would have been granted long ago. I am unable to endure, Oh hero, the installation of any one else except yourself which is likewise hateful to all the people. Pray pardon me for this. Equally do I

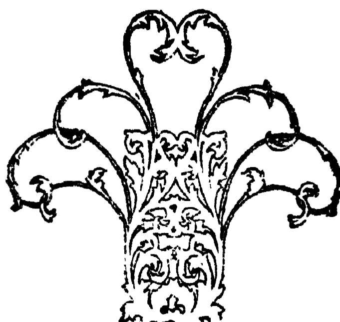
loathe, Oh high-souled one, that so-called dharma which has confused you with its glamour and has brought your mind to this state of duality. How can you, able and powerful as you are, obey, under the pretext of Karma, the most abominable and unrighteous words of the father who is entirely under the control of Kaikeyi. But if thou wilt still shut thine eyes and see not the guile that lies herein, terrible is the grief that rises in me and virtue seems to be a thing to be scorned. How can you even think of fulfilling the desires of that pair ever bent on passion who under the guise of being our parents are our enemies, always doing mischief to us. If you still believe that this plot of theirs is the work of Fate even then you should disregard it. I do not like it at all! It is only the weak and the powerless who follow the path of Fate but the mighty heroes whose prowess is held in high regard disdain to bow their heads to Fate. He who dares to control his Fate with vigorous act and manly soul does not lose heart though threatening Fate assails his hope This day mankind shall learn aright the power of Fate and human might.

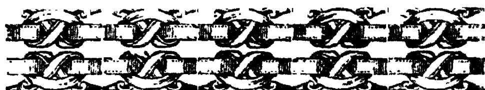
The gulf that lies between man and Fate shall be clearly seen to-day. People shall witness to-day Fate subdued by my might. By my might I will thwart this Fate whose stroke has this day deprived you of being installed in the kingdom and which resembles a mad and furious elephant that has gone out of the control of the driver's goad. Not all the guardians of the world, not even all the three worlds together could stop the installation of Rama to-day. What need be said of father. Those who have decided in secret on your exile to the forest, Oh King, shall themselves be banished likewise to the forest for fourteen years. I shall today destroy and tear to pieces the hopes entertained by father and Kaikeyi namely the obtaining of the kingdom for their son by hindering your installation. Those who are opposed to my might could not withstand it on the strength of the might of Fate. My fierce strength will certainly be to their grief. After protecting the subjects for a thousand years, when you repair to the forest, your sons shall succeed to the kingdom. Dwelling in the forest, following the path of

royal saints is ordained of old to such Kings as entrust the kingdom to the care of their sons that they may protect it like their sires If owing to the distraction of the King you fear confusion in the kingdom and consequently, Oh virtuous Rama, you do not wish to take up the burden of the kingdom on yourself, I swear to you, Oh hero—otherwise I shall not attain the region of heroes—I swear to you to guard your kingdom like the shores that guard the sea. You had better engage yourself in getting yourself installed with all auspiciousness. Single-handed I am sufficiently strong to overcome all these lords of the earth. Both these hands of mine are not possessed by me for beauty's sake nor is the bow an ornament. The sword is not intended to be kept bound up nor are the arrows mere props. All these four belong to me for the purpose of suppressing enemies Small is the love I show for him whom I count to be my foe. With the sharp-edged sword flashed out with lightning lustre, I heed not for my enemies even though they wield the thunderbolt. With the tremendous sweep and clash of my sword the field of

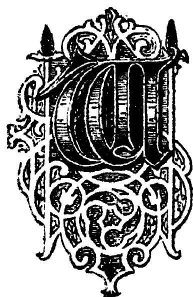
battle shall be covered thick and made impassable with the severed trunks of the elephants, thighs of the horses and heads of infantry. Struck by my keen sword's trenchant blade the enemies shall fall down beheaded like blazing mountains rent in twain or lightning clouds that burst in rain. When, armed with brace and glove, I stand and take my bow in hand, who then shall vaunt his might or who dares to count himself a man to meet me there? Then will I lose my shafts and strike man, elephant and steed alike in their vital parts. At once many an arrow shall fly and many a foe with one shall die. This day, the world shall witness my skill in arms:—My strength shall abase the monarch and set thee, Oh lord, in the lordliest place. This day these worthy hands which breathe the sandal's scent, which are ornamented with golden bracelets, which bestow precious gifts and guard the friends, these hands, Oh Rama shall perform a noble deed this day, namely the discomfiture of those who create obstacles to your installation. Speak brother, tell me now which of your enemies shall be cut off

by me from life, fame and friends. Say how may all this sea-girt land be brought to own thy sway. Thy faithful servant here I stand to listen and obey." Then that pride of Raghu's race consoled Lakshmana repeatedly, wiping at the same time the tears that rolled down his cheek, and said—"Know me as firm in my resolve to abide by my father's words. That, Oh gentle one, is the true and virtuous path."





CANTO XXIV.



HEN Kausalya saw that Rama was resolved to obey his father's decree she spoke thus to her virtuous son though interrupted by sobs and tears—"Can he. a stranger yet to pain, whose pleasant words charm all hearts, born of me and King Dasaratha, live on the grain which his hands may glean? Can he whose slaves and menials eat the finest cooked food, live in the forest eating roots and fruits? Who shall believe or who shall not tremble when he hears that Raghava, so noble and held so dear, is expelled by the King, his father? Certainly Fate is all-powerful in this world, it orders all as it may

list. It is only through its influence, Oh charming Rama, that you now go to the forest. This terrible and incomparable fire of grief that has sprung within me shall, fanned with the storm of your absence, kindled by my sorrowful lamentations, fed with the offerings of my weeping eyes, surrounded with the great smoke of anxiety caused inwardly by not seeing you, this great fire of grief, which is the source of hard groans and sighs, shall, Oh son, greatly reduce me and when I stay here bereft of you shall surely burn me just like the summer sun burning the grass after the close of the winter. How could the cow stay behind without following its calf when it goes out? Similarly I shall follow you, Oh son, wherever you go." Hearing these words of his mother, the bull among men, Rama, replied thus to his greatly afflicted mother. "The King has been duped by Kaikeyi and when I go to the forest, if you also abandon him, he shall surely not live. The abandonment of one's husband is the cruellest sin a woman can commit. Therefore you must not even in thought commit such a dire sin.

So long as my father, the lord of the earth and the descendant of Kakutstha, lives, you ought to be serving him. That is the law of eternal Dharma." Thus addressed by Rama the fair-looking Kausalya became satisfied and told Rama, the remover of her woes, "so be it." When thus replied to, Rama the foremost among virtuous men again addressed these words to his mother who was deeply distressed. "It is but proper that both yourself and myself should obey father's words. King, Lord, Guru and best of men he is, as also the lord and master of all. I will spend my days in the forest till nine and five years have passed and then with great joy I will come again and remain faithful to your words." Thus addressed, the queen Kausalya, unable to bear her grief and with eyes full of tears, told her beloved son Rama "Oh Rama I shall not be able to live in the midst of these rival wives; so lead me also, Oh descendant of Kakutstha, to the forest like a woodland roe, if you are resolved to go into exile in accordance with the wishes of your father." Repressing his tears Rama replied thus to his weeping mother. "During life

the husband is the god and lord of a woman; hence both for you and me, Oh lady, the king is now the superme master. When the lord of the whole world, the wise king lives we should not consider ourselves as helpless. Bharata also is noble and virtuous, captivating the hearts of all creatures with his words and ever bent on virtue, he will surely attend upon you. When I am gone to the forest you must with great care behave in such a way that the king may not feel pain at the separation from his son. This grief is too fierce. You must see that it does not consume him. With all attention always do what is good and pleasing to the aged king. A woman always engaged in fasts and vows, though she may be highly excellent in every way, if she does not attend on her husband shall surely reach the world of sinners. The woman who serves her husband well, surely obtains the highest svarga. She need not worship any gods, she may turn away from worshipping the deities, still bent on doing what is good and pleasant to him she should always attend on her husband. This is the eternal law of Dharma observed by our

ancients and ordained in the Srutis and Smritis. Eagerly awaiting my return, while away your time, Oh lady, with offering oblations in the fire and worshipping the gods for my welfare with lovely flowers and with honouring the virtuous Brahmins. Abstemious and humble, devoted to the service of your husband, you shall obtain supreme bliss when I return if the best of virtuous men shall hold to his life till then." Thus addressed by Rama, Kausalya, grieved at the separation from her son and with her eyes dimmed with tears, spoke thus to Rama. "Oh son, I am not able to alter your firm determination to depart from hence. Certainly Fate is irresistible. Go, dear child, firm as you are and may all bliss attend you. When you return again all my troubles will disappear. You will return with your duty done, your vows discharged and with high glory won. You will be free from filial debt. Then will I obtain sweetest joy. Fate's course Oh son, is always incomprehensible in this world. Since, Oh Raghava, it goads you on heedless of my words, go forth, Oh powerful hero, and come

back safe. You shall then please me, Oh child, with your soothing sweet tones. I wish that the time of return from the forest is near so that, Oh child, I may gladly see you with matted hair and hermit dress returning from the forest." Thus did the queen Kausalya look with a pleased heart on Rama who was bent on dwelling in the forest, spoke to him words fraught with happy omens and became eager to perform the benedictory ceremonies invoking all blessings on him.





CANTO XXV.

ASTING aside her grief and purifying herself with water, the respected mother of Rama commenced to perform the benedictory ceremonies "Since you are not to be dissuaded, Oh best of Raghus, repair now to the forest and return with speed. Follow always the path trod by the great and the good. That Dharma which you largely uphold with firmness and religiousness, may that self-same Dharma protect you, Oh tiger among the Raghus. Those deities whom you worship in the temples and holy shades, may the same deities protect you in company with the great sages. Those weapons which were given to you by the wise Visvamitra, may they guard your noble self gifted

with good qualities. May you live long, Oh son, your sure defence shall be your truthful innocence and that obedience, which naught can tire, to your mother and likewise to your father. May the holy fuel, the sacrificial grass the sanctified altars, and the sacrificial shed, the different kinds of sacred grounds, rocks, trees, shrubs, and lakes, birds and reptiles and lions, may all these protect you, Oh best of men. May the Sadhyas, Visvedevas, Maruts and the great sages be propitious. May the Creator and the sustainer of the universe be propitious. Likewise may Poosha, Bhaga, Aryama and all the guardians of the quarters namely Indra and others, be propitious. The seasons, the fortnights, the months, years, nights and days, yea even the hours, may all these always do you good. May your memory, fortitude and dharma protect you on all sides, Oh son! May the illustrious god Skanda in company with Uma and Brihaspati, may the seven Rishis and Narada protect you on all sides. Further, all those Siddhas and the quarters with their guardians who have been worshipped and praised by me, let

all of them, Oh son, protect you in the forest. All the mountains and oceans, King Varuna himself, the sky and the ether, earth and all the rivers likewise, the hosts of stars and the planets with their deities, the day and night as also the twilights, may all these protect you during your residence in the forest, The six seasons, the holy months as also the years, minutes and seconds, may all these bring you happiness while you roam in the great forest wearing the garb of an ascetic. May the Adityas and Daityas also always give you happiness. Oh son, let there be no fear for you, from Rakshasas and Pisachas of cruel and fierce deeds, as also from beasts of prey. May the apes, scorpions, flies and gnats, creeping reptiles and worms, may none of these do you any harm in the forest. Mighty elephants, lions, tigers, bears and boars and wild horned buffaloes, may these not injure you Oh child. Whatever other creatures there may exist who are savage and feed on human flesh, may they not trouble you, Oh child, being worshipped by me from here. Blessed be thy ways. May sweet success bless the valour of my

darling. To all that Fortune can bestow go forth my child my Rama, go. May all the lords of the air as also all the gods who may be opposed to you, may all of them do you good again and again. May Indra, the Moon and the Sun, Kubera and Yama likewise, won by my earnest prayers, protect you, Oh Rama, when you live in the Dandaka forest. May Agni and Vayu as also the Smoke and the Mantras that fell from the lips of the sages—May all these protect you, Oh joy of the Raghus, while you bathe. May Brahma, the creator of all the worlds, the sustainer of all the creatures as also the great sages and all the remaining gods protect you while staying in the forest." Having thus worshipped and praised in a befitting manner all the gods with sandal and garlands the glorious Kausalya of beautiful expansive eyes procured a fire with the help of a virtuous Brahmin and offered oblations therein in accordance with the injunctions, for the purpose of securing the happiness of Rama. That best of dames Kausalya collected there with great care ghee, white garlands and white mustard. Then the

priest duly offered the oblations for the peace and health of Rama and with the remnants of the offered oblations performed the outward Bali offerings. The priest then gave the Brahmins, honey, curds, akshatas and ghee and made them repeat the benedictory prayers and thus bless Rama who was going to the forest. Then the illustrious mother of Rama gave that best of Brahmins an enviable lordly fee and addressed Raghava thus "may such blessings crown you, as were showered on the thousand-eyed Indra when he bowed to the Devas on the destruction of Vritra. May such blessings crown you as Vinata once gave to that king of birds Suparna when he longed for the nectar. May the blessing showered by Aditi on the wielder of the thunderbolt, at the slaughter of the asuras when the nectar was produced, may that blessing be on you. May the blessing which attended on Vishnu of unequalled glory when he began his three steps, may that blessing be on you, Oh Rama. May the seasons, the oceans, the islands, the Vedas, the worlds, and the quarters, may all these auspicious ones bless

you, Oh mighty armed hero." Thus did the beautiful lady place the remnants on the head of her son and sprinkling Rama with sweet scents Kausalya of lovely eyes set on the heroe's arm as talismanic amulet the auspicious creeper of proved efficacy known as *Visalyakarani* and also murmered low the holy mantras. She spoke as though pleased being in reality wrung with pangs of grief. She bent and kissed his forehead and embracing him the glorious Kausalya said " Go Rama, firm in thy purpose, go as you please and after the fulfilment of your object return to Ayodhya safe and well. I shall then, see you happy,Oh child, well-established in royal duties. With all my grief driven out and my face lighted up with joy I shall see you returning from the forest just like the rise of the full moon. I shall see my darling seated on the auspicious throne on his return from the forest. After having faithfully obeyed the father's commands I shall be happy to see you return from the forest with all choicest blessings. May you fill with reptures new my bosom, as also that of your consort. The hosts of Devas, Siva and

others, the great sages, the *bhutas*, the great asuras and Uragas have all been worshipped by me. May all these as well as the quatrers encompass your welfare, Oh Rama, now that you have started for a long residence in the forest." Thus with eyes full of tears did Kausalya finish the benedictory ceremonies in due form. She then went round Raghava and again and again pressed him hard to her bosom. Similarly Rama went round the queen, his mother, and again and again bowed at her feet. Thence the highly illustrious Raghava, radiant with his own glory, proceeded towards the mansion of Sita.





CANTO XXVI.



IDDING adieu to Kausalya, Rama. steadfast in his virtuous resolve started to the forest on completion of the benedictory ceremonies by his mother. As through the crowded royal street he passed, the royal prince cast a radiance on the way and by his fair qualities he moved as it were the hearts of the people.

The poor Vaidehi did not hear any of these things and so her heart was solely occupied with the thought of the installation of Rama as Yuvaraja. With grateful heart and joyful thought she performed the worship of the gods and being well learned in royal duties she was expecting the arrival of

the royal prince. As he entered his well-decorated mansion full of joyful crowds, Rama bent his head a little with shame. Then Sita rose up from her seat and her whole frame trembled at the sight of her lord, grief-stricken and with senses disquieted with care. On seeing her the virtuous-souled Rama was not able to control his inward mental grief and consequently it exhibited itself outwardly. Noting his pale face and perspiring body and his altered cheer she became consumed with grief and said "What is this now Oh lord. What has caused this change of temperament in you? Sage Brahmins declare this day as one in which Brihaspati looks down benign and the Moon rests in Pushya's sign. Why do you grieve, Oh Raghava? Why does no umbrella white as water's foam spread wide its hundred ribs and cover with splendour thy fair head below? Why is not your lovely face with its lotus-like eyes fanned with royal chowries bright as the moon and white as the geese? I do not find here, Oh bull among men, eloquent bards, heralds and panegyrists, joyfully hailing you with aus-

picious praises. Why do no Brahmins versed in the Vedas, pour curds and honey on thy head already anointed with due rights. I do not find your subjects, townsmen, country-folk as well and all the Chiefs of every guild, well dressed and adorned, eagerly desiring to follow you, Why does not the royal chariot decked with golden trinkets and yoked with four fast speeding horses not proceed in front of you? No elephant marked with all auspicious signs is seen, Oh hero, preceding the crowd like a huge hill or thundercloud, nor do I behold, Oh lovely prince, your servants running before you with a pretty looking royal seat embroidered with gold and adored by warriors. If everything be ready for the installation why this mournful plight just at present? Why do I see this sudden change, this altered mien so sad and pale?" While Sita bewailed thus, the joy of the Raghus replied "Oh Sita my honoured father commands me to go an exile to the forest. Oh high-born lady, Oh knower of virtue, Oh follower of Dharma, hear, Oh Janaki, the story of how this happened to me. My father the King Dasaratha, who

firmly sticks to truth, gave long ago two boons to my mother Kaikeyi. Now when the King had made everything ready for my installation she saw her oppertunity and reminded him of that old vow and won him over by means of Dharma. I have to live in the Dandaka forest for fourteen years and my father has made Bharata the Yuvaraja. So I am come here to see you before my departure to the lovely forest. Do not ever make mention of me in the presence of Bharata for those who are crowned with prosperity do not endure to hear another being eulogised. Therefore my virtues are never to be mentioned in the presence of Bharata nor should you be specially maintained by him at any time. Thus you will be able to stay near him as one favourable to him. The King has granted him this permanent post of Yuvaraja and hence he should be pleased by you, Oh Sita, and much more so the King. In obedience to the vow of my guru I am now on my way to the forest. Be firm, Oh noble-minded Sita. When I am gone to the forest in the garb of a hermit it behoves you, Oh faultless and

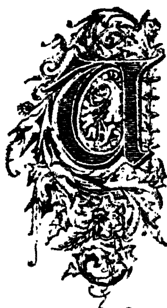
auspicious girl, to be always engaged in fasts and vows. Rising up betimes perform with due rights the puja of the devas. Then bow to the lord of men, my father Dasaratha. My mother Kausalya also is aged and worn with grief. Hence it behoves you to revere and regard her always, considering dharma alone to be foremost. My other mothers also should always be respected by you because they are indeed my mothers by love and fond attention shown to me. Both Bharata and Satrughna who are dearer to me than my life should be specially looked after by you like brothers or sons. You should never do anything unpleasant to Bharata for he is indeed the lord of the country as well as the family. Kings are always pleased by assiduous service and virtuous conduct and get enraged if anything contrary happens. Lords of men renounce even sons born of their own wombs if they find them doing mischief and take into favour even strangers if they are skilfull and clever. It therefore behoves you, Oh auspicious girl, to stay here revering the will of King Bharata, bent on dharma and maintaining the vows of truth. I am going to

the dense forest, Oh darling and you have to live here only, Oh lovely one. You must so behave as not to offend any one by your conduct and thus keep up my words."





CANTO XXVII.



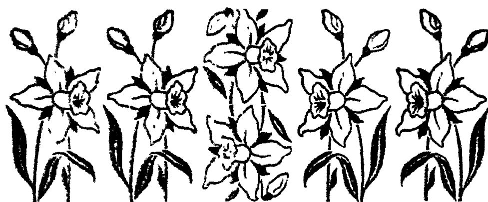
AIDEHI, beloved and sweet-tongued as she was, when addressed thus, replied to her husband with rage arising out of love. "What words are these that you have uttered Oh Rama. Certain it is that you have thought very mean of me. I could not but laugh on hearing your words, Oh son of the best of men. Father, mother, brother son and daughter-in-law likewise. Oh noble husband, each of them reaps the reward of his or her own meritorious actions. It is the wife alone, Oh bull among men, that shares the lot of her husband. Therefore I have also been commanded to live in the forest. The husband alone is the sole refuge for a woman

both in this life and hereafter and not the father, self, son, mother or friend. If, Oh Raghava, you start this day to the impenetrable forest I shall go in front of you clearing the prickly grass and thorns. Casting aside anger and jealousy, like the remnants of the drunken water, lead me on, Oh hero, with full confidence. There is no sin in me. Whatever be his lot it is far more preferable to to follow like a shadow the husband's feet than to lie in rich palaces or roam at pleasure through the sky in aerial cars. I have been taught by my father and mother as to how I should behave in all conditions of life and hence I do not now stand in need of being taught the duties of a wife. I shall go to the impenetrable forest bereft of all human beings, full of herds of different kinds of deer and inhabited by tigers and wolves. I shall live in the forest happily just as I will do in my father's house, thinking naught of all the three worlds but devoted solely to the service of my husband. Firmly adhering to the vows of a *Brahmacharini* I will constantly attend on you and will stroll with you, Oh hero, in the forest full of sweet honey and fragrance.

You are perfectly strong, Oh Rama, to protect in the forest any person stranger though he may be. What need be said of me, Oh revered one. There is absolutly no doubt that I am now going to the forest with you. It is not possible, Oh glorious one, to divert me from my set purpose. I shall surely eat there every day the roots and fruits and living with you I shall not give you any trouble. With yourself, my brave lord, beside me I long to gaze fearlessly upon all the rivers, rocks, lakes and glades. In company with your heroic self I long to view happily the tanks, covered with beautiful lotus flowers and whose waters are splashed by swans and ducks. Observing my vows I shall bathe in them daily and in your company, Oh broad-eyed hero, I shall feel extremely happy. Thus when I stay with you I will not feel the passing of even hundreds or thousands of years and I would not prize even heaven above this pleasure. If I am to dwell even in *swarga* itself without you, Oh Raghava, it would not please me, Oh tiger among men. Surely shall I go to the forest however dense it may be and however

crowded with beasts, apes and elephants. I shall surely live in the forest as though in my father's house ever clinging to your feet with all attention. With thoughts for none else but you and with heart ever attached to you, if I am now forsaken by you, know me to be resolved on death. Pray take me along with you and fulfil my entreaty. You will surely not feel me a burden." In spite of all such entreaties of Sita, the best of men who was ever attached to virtue did not like to take Sita with him and tried his best to dissuade her by relating to her the miseries consequent upon a residence in the forest.





CANTO XXVIII.



VEN though Sita argued so much, the knower of virtue, Rama, partial to duty, did not make up his mind to take her with him in consideration of the hardships in the forest. He sought to soothe the grief of her whose eyes were dimmed with overflowing tears and noble as he was, he spoke again to her these words with a view to dissuade her from her resolve. "O Sita, you are born of an illustrious family and are bent always on treading the path of virtue. You had better follow

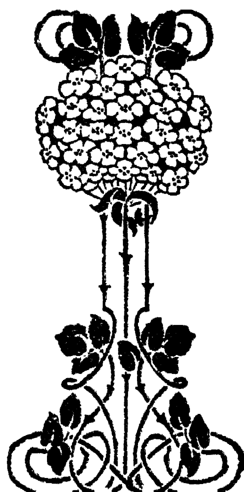
your dharma here so that I may have peace of mind for me. Oh Sita, it behoves you to do as I bid you to do There are numerous dangers in the forest, Oh girl : Listen to me, Oh girl. as I go on reciting them. Oh Sita let this resolve to dwell in the forest be abandoned. It is full of dangers and is extremely dense and hence only is called forest I tell you these words with a view indeed to your good. In the wild wood no joy I know ; a forest life is naught but woe. The roarings of the lions dwelling in the caves of the mountains along with the noises of the mountain-torrents are terrible to hear and hence, my love, the wood is full of woes. There in that unpeopled forest mighty beasts of prey play about fearlessly and when they see a man they fly at him furiously and hence the wood is full of woes. There the streams are always full of wild crocodiles, very muddy and absolutely impassable even by infuriated elephants and hence the wood, my love, is full of woes. There the pathways are impenetrable and waterless, full of creepers and thorns resounding with the sounds of wild cocks and

hence the wood is full of woes. Exhausted with the toils of the day one has to lie down there on the cold ground upon a heap of gathered leaves and hence life in the wood, my love, is very miserable. Restraining ourselves we have to be content, Oh Sita, through the long days and nights, with the fruits that have fallen from the trees and hence life in the forest is miserable.

We have to fast, Oh Maithili, as long as our strength would last. We have to wear bark-garments and matted locks of hair. We have to adore with due rites the gods and *pitris* and honour with respectful care each wandering guest who meets us there. Roaming about with all restraint, we have to bathe every day thrice at the proper time; therefore, my love, forest life is extremely hard. In accordance with the rules prescribed for the Rishis we have to offer in the altar, Oh girl, gifts of flowers gathered by ourselves and hence forest life is hard. Those who roam in the forest, Oh Maithili should be abstemious in their food and should be content with what they obtain and hence the forest life is hard. Violent winds,

darkness and hunger are always present there, as also terrible dangers worse than these and hence forest life is very hard indeed. The creeping reptiles are numerous and are of various forms, Oh lovely one, and they creep all over the ground wildly and hence the forest is full of woes. The serpents that hide by the rivers and glide in sinuous course like rivers, reside all over the path and hence the wood is full of woes. Birds and scorpions along with worms, gnats and mosquitoes give trouble always, Oh girl, and hence forest life is very hard. Trees and thorny bushes bind together their branches' ends and dense with grasses such as Kusa and Kasa the thicket grows and hence, Oh fair girl, the forest is full of woes. For those who dwell in the forest the ills of the flesh are numerous and the fears they are subjected to are of different kinds; hence the wilds are naught but grief and pain. Anger and desires must be cast aside and every thought must be devoted to penance. No fear must be of fearful things and hence the wood is for ever drear. Therefore, my dear, enough is the forest for you. The wild wood is not a

fit place for you. On mature consideration I find the forest full of innumerable evils." While thus the noble Rama did not make up his mind to take Sita with him to the forest, Sita did not heed his words but feeling terribly distressed she replied to Rama thus.





CANTO XI



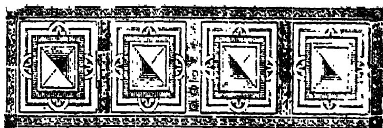
HEARING these words of Rama, Sita became troubled in mind and with tears in her eyes slowly uttered these words—"These evils that have been enumerated by you as attendant upon residence in the forest, I view them as good, out of my love to you. Beasts of prey, lions and elephants, tigers and Sarabhas, birds and deer and all other animals that roam in the forest, all of them, not having seen your matchless form before, Oh Raghava, shall all flee away at your sight for all creatures indeed take fright at danger. With thee, Oh Rama, I must go; such is my Sire's order and bereft of you, I must part with my life.

While I am near you, Oh Raghava, not even the lord of the Gods, Indra, will be able to hurt me in spite of all his might. The woman who is bereft of her lord will not be able to live. This truth has been clearly pointed out to me by you, Oh Rama. Further Oh wise one, I have heard it said by the Brahmins in my father's house long ago that I am destined to live in the forest for some time. Hearing this of old from the Brahmins versed in the science of the future, I have, Oh mighty one, ever since longed to lead the life of the forest. Hence the pre-ordained residence in the forest should indeed be enjoyed by me. So I follow you to the forest, Oh beloved, being destined thereto and not otherwise. I will be simply fulfilling that destiny by going with you. The time has now arrived for that Brahmin's words to become true. I know truly the innumerable dangers that beset a life in the forest. But they trouble only those men, Oh hero, who are not self-controlled. As a girl in my father's house I have heard all about life in the forest. Similarly in the presence of my mother a good-natured

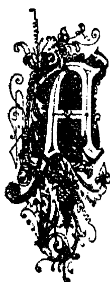
beggar-dame told me everything about it. I have already requested you on several occasions, Oh lord, to grant me my desire to live in the forest in your company and you also, Oh Raghava, were good enough to allow me to entertain that idea. May good betide you. Service to a hero dwelling in the forest charms me most. Oh pure-soul, following my husband out of affection I will surely become spotless. My husband is really my God. Even in after-life I share in your company all blessings. Such is indeed the Scripture and the holy and pious Brahmins also state likewise—'The woman whom her parents bestow on a man in this earth below and thus lawfully unite their hands with water and each holy rite, she shall be his wife in this world as also in the life after this.' Hence if you are not pleased to take with you your own wife who is virtuous and deeply attached to her husband, tell me your reasons fer the same. Devoted and attached to my husband I share equally with you all joys and pleasures. Distressed as I am and sharing equally as I do all your pleasures

and pains, it behoves you, Oh Kakutstha, to take me with you. If you do not like to take me with you to the forest—extremely distressed as I am, I will surely have recourse to poison, fire or water to secure my death." Thus she entreated in various ways to be taken to the forest but that mighty hero was not in a mood to take her to the lonely forest. When she was told thus Maithili was overwhelmed with grief and her breasts became wet with the hot tears flowing from her eyes and the self-controlled Kakutstha, with a view to dissuade her, who was angry and grief-stricken, consoled the copper-lipped girl in various ways.





CANTO XXX.

PPEASED thus by Rama, Maithili, the daughter of Janaka, spoke thus to her husband with a view to reside in the forest. The deeply distressed Sita, out of her love and affection, spoke tauntingly to Raghava of expansive chest. "What did my father Videha, the lord of Mithila, think of you having accepted you as his son-in-law—a woman in a man's disguise. It is pure falsehood if the people say out of ignorance that while Rama's prowess shines forth there is no energy as it were in the Lord of the day. What have you done that you should be so very dejected and whence is your fear that you should think of abandon-





ing me who have no other refuge but yourself? Know me as completely resigned to you in heart and body, soul and mind, just as Savitri virtuously gave her all to Satyavan, the son of Dyumatsena. I have not, even in my mind, seen anybody else except yourself, Oh faultless one; let meaner wives their houses shame, to go with thee is all my claim. Like some low actor do you consider fit, Oh Rama, to hand over to others your wife, your own, espoused in maiden youth, your unblemished companion for so long. Do you, Oh faultless lord, obey his will and remain under the influence of him whose welfare you are talking of and for whose sake you are denying yourself the royal kingdom. So without taking me with you, it is not fit that you should start to the forest. Whether it is stern penance or the forest or the heaven itself, let me also enjoy it along with you. There will be no trouble whatever in the road when I go with you. I would feel as though in a soft luxurious bed. The reeds, the bushes, the thorny trees and the prickly grass which I may pass on the way will be, if you are near, as soft as

the touch of cotton or dear-skin. When the rude wind blows in fury and throws upon me the scattered dust, that dust, Oh beloved lord, shall be to me as the precious sandal. What shall be more pleasant, Oh wanderer in the forest, than to lie on a bed of sacred grass in some green glade in the deep forest. Leaves, roots and fruits, whatever of these you may give me having brought them with your own hands, be they scanty or plentiful, shall taste to me as sweet as nectar. Enjoying there the flowers and fruits of the season I will not recollect my mother or my father or my home. My arrival there will in no way cause anything unpleasant to you. You will not be subjected to any anxiety on my behalf and I will not be an unbearable burden to you. With thee is heaven wherever the spot. Each place is hell where thou art not. Knowing well this supreme affection go forth Rama, along with me. If you still decide not to take me to the forest --me who am unflinchingly resolved upon it, I will surely drink poison this very day. I will never subject myself to those who hate us. There is no life for me afterwards

in the midst of the endless pain. Death is absolutely preferable, Oh lord, the very moment I am abandoned by you. Not for an hour could I endure the deadly grief of your separation. What need be said of the ten long years and three and one?

Thus consumed with grief and piteously lamenting much, the highly distressed Sita clung to her husband's neck with a wild cry, wrung with anguish. Like some she-elephant who bleeds, struck by the hunter's venomed reeds, so in her quivering heart she felt the many wounds dealt by his speeches. Then like the spark from the Arani wood down rolled the tear so long restrained. The crystal moisture sprung from woe began to flow from her sweet eyes as runs the water from a pair of divinely fair lotuses and Sita's face with long dark eyes pure as the moon of autumn skies faded with weeping just as the lotus buds when taken out of water. Finding her almost insensible with grief Rama embraced her well with both hands and revived her then with these consoling words. Leaving you behind full of grief I do not relish, Oh beloved, even heaven.

There is no fear whatever for me on all sides just as the self-created Lord. Without knowing your full intentions, Oh fair one, I did not like to take you to the forest though myself am quite capable of protecting you. When you are created to live with me in the forest, Oh Maithili, it is not possible for me to leave you behind, just as the self-restrained saint could not leave behind his renown. Oh you of lovely thighs resembling elephant's trunk, the Dharma which was practised of old by the great and the good, that same dharma is now followed by me just as the shadow follows the Sun. I cannot decline to go to the forest, Oh joy of Janaka, for my father's behest, the oath he swore and the claims of truth, all lead me there. Obedience to father and mother is indeed one's bounden duty, Oh lovely-hipped one. I am not eager to live transgressing father's commands. Heeding not father, mother and guru who are with us here, by what means could we worship and please the gods whose presence we are not aware of. These three comprise the triple world. Oh darling of the lovely eyes and

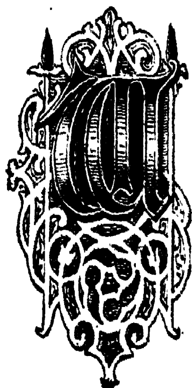
earth has no holy thing like these whom with all love men seek to please. Not truth or gift or reverence or sacrifice or lordly fee conduce to so much strength and happiness like the pleasing service to one's father. Heaven, riches, grain and varied love with sons and many a more blessing, none of these is unobtainable to those who follow the wishes of their parents. Those noble men who are ever bent on pleasing their father and mother reach the regions of Devas and Gandharvas as also the Brahmaloka and the Vishnuloka. So whatever commands may be issued by my father who remains steadfast in the path of virtue, I wish to abide by them. Such indeed is the eternal dharma. I am now reconciled, Oh Sita, to take you with me to the forest of Dandaka, since you are firmly resolved to follow me and to stay with me. Permitted to go to the forest, Oh timid lady of bewitching eyes and faultless limbs, follow me and be my companion in my religious observances. You have surpassed yourself, Oh Sita, by this excellent resolve of yours, which is quite in keeping with the traditions

of your family as well as mine. Commence at once. Oh fair-hipped lady, the preparations befitting a life in the forest. No even Heaven pleases me now, if it is to be bereft of you. Bestow gifts of gems to the Brahmins and food to the needy beggars, and make haste without delay. Highly valuable ornaments, excellent clothes, lovely toys and seasoned condiments, cars and vehicles and whatever else that may exist, give all those away to our servants after distribution to the Brahmins. Finding her husband agreeable to her departure, Sita became immensely pleased and quickly commenced to give away the things. With her mind full of joy on hearing the words of her husband, the noble and illustrious Sita began to give away to the virtuous all the wealth as well as the gems.





CANTO XXXI.

HEN Lakshmana, who had already joined them there, heard the conversation of the pair, his countenance was changed, his eyes overflowed and he was no longer able to control his grief. That joy of the Raghus pressed his brother's feet with great fervour and spoke thus to the highly virtuous Rama and the fair-famed Sita. "If you are decided to go to the forest crowded with deer and elephants, I will surely accompany you and with bow in hand go in front of you. In company with me you shall roam far in the forests which resound with

the noises of birds and herds of beasts. Separated from you I do not care to tread in the worlds of the devas nor do I choose immortality or the lordship of the worlds." When the son of Sumitra spoke thus, resolved to dwell in the forest, Rama tried his best by various means to pacify him and dissuade him from his object. Then Lakshmana spoke again thus—" You have already given me permission to follow you to the forest; then why do you now try to put obstacles in my way. I am eager to know the cause why you now prevent me from fulfilling my desire to go to the forest. I request you, Oh faultless one, to clear this doubt of mine." Then the highly effulgent Rama told the heroic Lakshmana who was standing in front ready to go forth first and who was entreating permission with folded hands. " Affectionate and bent on virtue, heroic and always steadfast in righteousness, beloved and dear as life and obedient, you are my brother as well as my friend. If you go with me now to the forest, Oh son of Sumitra, who is there to take care of either Kausalya or the illustrious Sumitra. The lord of

the earth of mighty power who sends good things in plenteous shower as Indra pours the grateful rains, lies a captive in passion's chain. That daughter of King Asvapati having obtained this kingdom will not do what is good to her grief-stricken co-wives. With the kingdom in his hands Bharata will take up Kaikeyi's side and will not care to remember either Kausalya or the highly grieving Sumitra. Do you therefore, Oh son of Sumitra, stay here of your own accord or by the favour of the monarch and protect Kausalya. Please act up to this counsel. By this behaviour your devotion to me will be clearly seen, Oh knower of virtue. Need I tell you that great and unequalled is the virtue acquired by serving our elders. Therefore, Oh son of Sumitra and joy of the Raghus, for my sake do thus. Bereft of us there will be no pleasure for our mothers.'

Thus addressed by Rama, Lakshmana, clever in speech, replied thus in sweet tones to Rama learned in the science of language. "Afraid of your power, Oh hero, Bharata will surely show all possible regard to Kausalya and Sumitra and there is no doubt whatever

that he will be all-attentive. If the wicked Bharata, having obtained this noblest realm, does not maintain them out of evil counsel or pride, I will, Oh hero, surely kill, without the least doubt, that wicked and cruel wretch and all those that lend him aid. Let it be even the three worlds; what care I for them? The noble Kausalya is able to maintain thousands like myself since she has got thousands of villages as well as retinue. Hence she is perfectly capable to protect herself as well as my mother. The illustrious lady is quite capable of protecting people like myself also. Hence be pleased to permit me to follow you. There is nothing wrong in this I shall be highly gratified and your object also will be fulfilled. Taking my bow and arrows I shall go in front of you with a spade and a basket showing you the way. I shall bring you daily roots and fruits and other products of the forest—such sweet edibles as are fit for hermits. Do you sport with Vaidehi on the slopes of the hills and I shall do everything for you both while you are awake and while you are asleep."

Highly pleased with these words Rama replied to him thus—"Go then my brother, bid adieu to all your friends and retinue: Those two celestial bows of fearful might which lord Varuna personally gave to Janaka at the great sacrifice, the unpiercable divine coat of mail, the quivers with their inexhaustible and unfailing arrows, the two gilded swords bright as the Sun, all these weapons which have been reverently placed in the abode of the preceptor, bring with you quickly, Oh Lakshmana." Thus resolved on forest life Lakshmana took leave of his friends and approaching the house of the preceptor of Ikshvakus he then took with him the excellent weapons. All those divine weapons which the tiger among the Raghus had worshipped and had adorned with garlands, Lakshmana exhibited before Rama. The self-controlled Rama, with great pleasure thus addressed Lakshmana on his arrival. "Oh lovely Lakshmana, you have arrived just in time when I wanted you, I wish to give away in your company, Oh repressor of foes, all these that form my wealth to Brahmins who lead ascetic lives. Several excel-

lent twice-born men live here with great devotion to our elders. To those as well as to all our dependants, I wish to distribute my wealth. Go and fetch quickly the best of Brahmins, the noble Suyajna the son of Visishtha. I shall start to the forest after paying my respects to him as well as to other eminent Brahmins."





CANTO XXXII.



ON receiving thus the pleasant and highly agreeable command of his brother, Lakshmana went swiftly to the abode of Suyajna and finding him in the hall of Fire he bowed to him and said "Oh friend, come with me and behold the abode of him who is now performing arduous deeds." Finishing his *sandhya* worship quickly Suyajna went in company with Lakshmana and arrived at the lovely mansion of Rama filled with riches. When that knower of Vedas, [illegible]jna, approached near, Rama accompanied by Sita welcomed him with folded hands and went round him showing

to him the honor that is Agni's due. With excellent golden armlets, lustrous ear-rings, gems fastened together on golden strings, bracelets and girdles, with numerous other costly gems, Kakutstha honoured Suyajna and at the request of Sita, Rama told him thus—"Oh my gentle friend, deign to accept on behalf of your wife this garland and golden string. Cause them to be taken home. Sita who is now going to the forest desires to give you now on behalf of your wife this girdle, these lovely armlets and these bright bracelets. Vaidehi wishes further to bestow on you this cot decked with numerous gems along with the fine mattress. The famous elephant named Sutrunjaya given me by my uncle, I shall bestow on you, Oh best of Brahmins, along with thousands of coins. Thus addressed by Rama, Suyajna received those gifts and invoked auspicious blessings on Rama, Lakshmana and Sita. Then in pleasant words Rama spoke to his dear and all-attentive brother Saumitri just as Brahma to the lord of the celestials. "Go and fetch those two excellent Brahmins, Agastya and

Kausika and inviting them, honour them, Oh Lakshmana, with precious gems just as corn with water. Please them, Oh highly powerful one, with a thousand cows and give them many a fair and costly gem along with gold and silver. The learned Brahmin, the preceptor of the Taittiriyas and the knower of the Vedas, who always devotedly stays by the side of Kausalya and Sumitra, cause him to be given, Oh Lakshmana, vehicles and female slaves and costly clothes till that Brahmin is satisfied. Likewise please the noble Chitraratha advanced well in years, who is the charioteer as well as minister, with highly valuable gems, clothes and riches. Give him also all the small animals as well as one thousand cows. Those numerous students with staffs in hand who read the *katha* portion of the Vedas and who do nothing else because of their being all-engrossed in their study, who toil not, who love dainty fare, and who are esteemed by the great, cause them to be given eighty cars loaded with costly gems, one thousand rice fields and two hundred bulls. Help them also, Oh Saumitri, with one

thousand cows to provide the dainties of each meal. The throng who wear the sacred girdles and wait with care on Kausalya, cause them each to be given, Oh Lakshmana, a thousand golden coins. Give all the Brahmins all round in such a manner, Oh Lakshmana, that my mother Kausalya would be pleased with the fees offered." Then that tiger among men, Lakshmana, personally distributed all the wealth to the best of Brahmins just like Kubera. Having given each of his dependants numerous wealth, Rama addressed all of them who stood there with tears in their eyes. "Lakshmana's house and mine as well should each be guarded by you till my return." Having addressed all his grief-stricken attendants he bade his treasurer to fetch more riches. Then all the servants themselves brought there the stored wealth and the huge and glorious pile of the same was a sight to see. Then that tiger among men, in company with Lakshmana, had that wealth distributed among the Brahmins, young and old and poor.

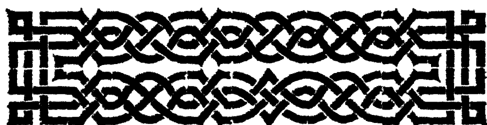
There lived a Brahmin of reddish brown colour, Trijaṭa by name, of Gargya Gotra,

who earned his livelihood every day in the forest with his spades and ploughs. This old Brahmin had a young wife who, taking with her the young children and struggling with poverty, spoke thus to the Brahmin— "Throwing aside your spade and plough please do what I say. Go and see the virtuous Rama if you wish to get anything." Hearing the words of his wife and covering with difficulty his body with torn rags he started on his way to the abode of Rama. In the midst of the concourse of people Trijata shone bright as Bhrigu and Angiras. Till the fifth court he wended his way uninterrupted by anybody. Approaching the royal prince, Trijata spoke thus—"Oh illustrious prince, I am a poor man devoid of riches and possess numerous sons. Scant living I earn in the forest every day and so pray look upon me with an eye of pity." Rama then told him in a vein of sport and jest.—"I have not as yet distributed one thousand cows, so you shall obtain as much as is covered by your hurling this stick.' He hurriedly girded up his loins, wound his ragged cloth and taking up the stick hurled

it fast with all his might. Released from his hand the stick crossed the shores of the river Sarayu and fell in the cattle-shed in the midst of several thousands of bulls and cows. The noble Rama embraced him with pleasure and ordered the herdsman to take to the hermitage of Trijata all the cattle up to the shores of the river Sarayu covered by the throw of the stick. Then Rama appeased the Brahmin of the Garga Gotra and spoke to him thus—"Pray don't get angry, this is only a jest of mine. This might of yours is unrivalled. Wishing to know of it, I urged you to do thus. Pray choose whatever else you require. I tell you truly you must not hesitate. All the wealth here that belongs to me is intended only to be given to Brahmins. The wealth that I now bestow upon you shall be the one earned by me and shall bring me pleasure and renown. Then the great sage Trijata, in company with his wife, accepted the herds of cows with a delighted heart and the highly effulgent one on his part invoked blessings on the princely couple which would bring them fame and might, pleasure and happiness.

And Rama also with a full heart distributed his vast riches earned by rightful prowess to his friends accompanied with sweet, respectful and befitting words. Brahmins, friends or servants, poor people or beggars, whoever it may be, there was none who was not pleased with the gifts made in accordance with his deserts.





CANTO XXXIII.



ISTRIBUTING thus, in company with Vaidehi, the numerous riches, Rama and Lakshmana along with Sita set out to see their father. When the weapons that were beautifully adorned with bands and garlands were taken up by the two brothers they shone so bright as to dazzle the sight. And the people getting on the tops of the turrets, roofs and porticoes looked on these passers-by with great sorrow. Unable to tread the streets because of the pressure of the vast concourse they ascended the terraces of the building and beheld Rama helplessly. When the people saw Rama proceed on foot without any umbrella to cover him, the people, with their

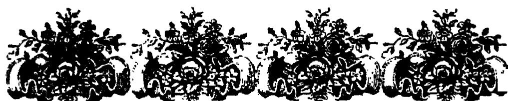
senses bewildered on account of grief, spoke variously as follows.—" He, who was always followed by the mighty fourfold forces, proceeds now along with Sita followed by Lakshmana alone; he who has tasted the sweets of wealth and has lavished his luxurious gifts on the needy, he does not now wish to make his father false because of his regard for dharma. She who was till now unable to be seen even by those creatures that roamed in the sky, that Sita is now beheld by all the passers-by who throng the royal street. Sita who is fragrant with red sandal and is beautiful with suitable tints on her body is sure to fade and pale quickly by exposure to rain, heat and cold. Surely King Dasaratha is now possessed of some devil and hence only speaks thus, otherwise the King would never consent to send his dear son into exile. Even if the son is devoid of all good qualities how could one agree to banish him. What need be said about the son who has gained the hearts of all the world solely by his conduct. Universal benevolence, kindness, learning, religiousness, docility and freedom

from passion, these six sovereign virtues grace Rama the foremost among men. Therefore the subjects are highly distressed at the misery that has befallen Rama just like acquatic creatures at the decrease of water in summer. The whole world is mournful with the grief that has befallen its beloved chief just as the flowers and fruits of a tree when its roots are cut away. The Soul of duty, bright to see, is the root of all mankind and all the other people are his branches, blossoms, fruits and leaves. Hence along with our wives and relations we shall, like Lakshmana, quickly follow Raghava wherever he may lead. Abandoning our gardens, fields and houses we shall follow the virtuous Rama sharing in his weal and woe. Let Kaikeyi possess herself of the homes deserted by us, deprived of their buried treasures, with their unswept courtyards, robbed of kine and wealth, shorn of all substance, filled with dust and shrines whence the dieties have fled—homes where numerous rats will run from hole to hole, bereft of smoke or water, which will know no cleaning and where no incense loads the

evening air, no Brahmins chant the text and prayer, no fire of sacrifice is lit bright, no gift is known, no sacred rite and with floors strewn with broken vessels as if our woes had crushed them too. The wood where Rama's feet may roam shall be our city and our home and this city which we forsake shall become a wilderness. Terrified by fear of us the serpents would leave their holes and all the birds and beasts the mountain slopes and the lions and elephants would flee from the forest. Let them leave off the forest to which we go and inhabit in exchange the city that is forsaken by us. Let the serpents, beasts and birds resort to the regions occupied till now by those who eat grass, flesh and fruits. Let Kaikeyi enjoy this realm with her sons and relations. We shall all go to the forest along with Rama and live there happily." Such were the varied words spoken aloud by the crowd of all conditions. Rama heard them all but did not change his purpose. He soon approached his father's palace that shone like the peak of Kailasa, powerful as a wild elephant. The virtuous Rama entered the royal

palace and saw there at a distance the humble and heroic Sumantra seated in a dejected mood. Seeing Sumantra thus depressed Rama smiled within himself and with quite an unmoved heart went on cheerfully, eager to see his father and to duly obey his bidding. The noble Rama, the son of the Ikshvaku race, desired to take leave of his virtuous father before going to the forest, full of woes and when he beheld Sumantra stopped there. Firm in his resolve to go to the forest in obedience to his father's commands, Rama, ever attached to virtue, beheld Sumantra and told him thus "Please inform the King of my arrival."





CANTO XXXIV.



REAT and incomparable as he was, Rama of the lotus-eyes then asked the charioteer to inform his father of his arrival. Thus ordered by Rama, the charioteer, sad and all-dismayed, quickly entered inside and saw the King heaving heavy sighs of woe. Like the sun when eclipsed, like the fire covered over with ashes, like the pool with all its waters dried, so he found the lord of the world. Beholding the King whose senses had been dazed on account of his grief for Rama, the highly wise charioteer approached the King with folded hands. Having first hailed the King with blessings invoking victory, the charioteer, with a voice that well-nigh

failed, in trembling accents soft and low, addressed the monarch thus. "That tiger among men, your son, waits at the door having given away all his wealth to Brahmins and to his dependants. Pray permit the truly valorous Rama to have an interview with you; May good betide you. He has taken leave of all his friends and is now desirous of seeing you. He is going to the great forest Oh lord of the earth; pray see him who is surrounded with all royal qualities just like the sun with his rays." Then that truthful and virtuous King, profound as the Ocean's deep and stainless as the blue sky, replied the charioteer thus. "Oh Sumantra, fetch all my wives and all those here who call themselves mine. I wish to see Raghava in company with my wives." He entered the Zenana accordingly and told the ladies thus—"Noble Ladies, the King summons you all; may you all go there without delay." Thus addressed by Sumantra all the ladies, learning of the command of their husband, went to his mansion in obedience to the royal orders. In number they were half seven hundred and all these

virtuous dames, with their eyes red with weeping, slowly went to the King's palace surrounding Kausalya. When the lord of the earth observed that all his wives had come, the King commanded his charioteer Sumantra to fetch his son. Then the charioteer took with him Rama, Lakshmana, and Maithili swiftly to the presence of the monarch. The King beholding from a distance the approach of his son with folded hands tastefully rose up from his seat, girt with his ladies and sick with his woes. The lord of the earth on beholding Rama ran with all haste to meet him but ere he could reach him he fell on the ground aggrieved and fainted there. Quickly Rama and that great warrior Lakshmana approached the grief-stricken King rendered senseless by misery. There arose immediately in the royal apartments the sound of thousands of females crying 'Ah Rama' mingled with the tinkling of the ornaments. Throwing their arms round him the two brothers Rama and Lakshmana weeping in company with Sita, slowly placed him on a couch. When the mighty monarch regained

his senses in the course of an hour, Rama, with folded hands thus addressed him who was immersed in the ocean of grief—"I solicit your permission, Oh mighty monarch; you are the lord of all of us; I have started for the Dandaka forest and I request you to see me safely depart with your blessings. Please permit Lakshmana and Sita also to follow me to the forest. Though I have dissuaded them with various truthful arguments they would not listen but are desirous to follow me. Hence please permit us all, Lakshmana, myself and Sita as well like Prajapati his sons and leave off your grief, Oh revered one." Seeing his son Rama ready to start to the forest the King thus replied to him who was eagerly and calmly expecting the words of the lord of the world. "Oh Raghava, I have been deceived by Kaikeyi by the gift of those boons. Superseding me you had better be now the king of Ayodhya." Thus addressed by the King, Rama, the best of those who practise Dharma and the skilled in speech folded his hands in reverence and replied to his father thus. "Oh lord of men, you are

the master of the earth for a thousand years more. I will live in the forest, for I must never make you false. I will roam in the forest just for nine years and five and then at the end of the period of your vow, I shall return, Oh lord of men, and clasp your feet once more." Bound by the chords of truth, weeping distressed, the King, urged in secret by Kaikeyi spoke thus to his dear son. "Go then, Oh Rama and begin thy course unvexed by fear and sin; go, my beloved son, and earn success and joy and safe return. You are so very truthful and so firmly established in virtue that nothing is possible to turn you back, Oh joy of the Raghus, but, Oh son, do not by any means depart to-night so that I may pass at least one little day beholding my son. Seeing me and your mother you had better stay here this one night. Then with all your desires fulfilled you may start to the forest to-morrow morning. Anyhow a most difficult task is being done by you, Oh Raghava, just to please me, for you are going to the lonely forest leaving behind everything dear I do not like this, Oh son; I

swear to you truly, Oh Raghava, that I have been deceived by this deceitful woman who resembles hidden fire. You now desire to give effect to this deceitful advantage obtained from me urged thereto by this Kaikeyi who has come to sully her line. And it is no wonder that being my eldest son you desire to make your father stand above any reproach of falsehood." Hearing these words of his father spoken out of distress, Rama in company with his brother Lakshmana, thus humbly replied. "Who will confer on me to-morrow the merit which I shall reap from going to-day; therefore I choose immediate departure above all other desires. I hereby renounce my rights to this earth with all its fortresses and people and its stores of wealth and grain. Let all of them be handed over to Bharata. The resolve that I have made regarding my residence in the forest is not to be altered now for out of your pleasure you have granted this boon to Kaikeyi, Oh granter of boons. Let everything be given and you had better remain truthful, Oh monarch. I shall obey your commands literally as they were uttered

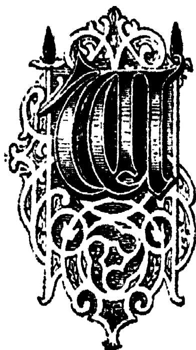
and will reside in the forest for fourteen years in company with those that roam the woods. Pray do not hesitate. Let the whole of this earth be granted to Bharata. I am not as eager to enjoy for myself the kingdom, the pleasures or the joys, as I am to obey your mandates, Oh joy of the Raghus. Let your grief be dismissed and let not you be drowned in tears. The lord of rivers, the irrepressible ocean never forsakes his magnanimity. I do not desire either the Kingdom or pleasures or Maithili or any of these objects of enjoyment or the heaven or life itself. My sole desire is, Oh bull among men, to see you truthful and not false. I swear to this in your presence by your truth and by your good deeds. It is not possible for me Oh father, to stay here for a moment longer. Pray put up with this your grief, Oh lord; my settled will I cannot change on any account. Kaikeyi told me 'Raghava go to the forest' and I said in reply 'I will go.' I wish to be true to that pledge. Pray don't make yourself anxious about us. Oh lord, we shall be happy in the forest filled with wild deer and peaceful

herds and with voices of thousands of birds. It is said in the scriptures, Oh father, that the father is the God of even the Gods; therefore I shall do in accordance with the words of my father considering it to be a divine mandate. When the fourteen years have passed, Oh best of men, you shall see me again on my return; therefore leave off this grief. What for have you undergone this change, Oh tiger among men, you who have to soothe and restrain the tears of the crowd of all the people outside. Pray confer upon Bharata this city and this kingdom and this earth that have been renounced by me. I shall go to the forest and dwell there long in accordance with your behests. Oh King, let Bharata rule this earth renounced by me with all its hills and cities and forests and with its glorious well-marked frontiers. Let your words, Oh King, stand as they were uttered. I do not, Oh King, set my heart upon any great object of desire nor do I seek anything for my own pleasure. I am solely eager to obey your orders which are also approved by the good. So, Oh faultless one, dispel all your

grief on my behalf. Making you false, I do not now wish to choose either the entire Kingdom or all the objects of the senses or pleasures or Maithili or even life. By such behaviour of mine let your vow become truthful. I shall feel very happy in the forest eating the fruits and roots therein, beholding the mountains, streams and lakes and strolling in the glades full of peculiar trees. You had better be easy on that score." Thus surrounded with calamities and racked with anguish and pain, the King, far advanced in the loss of his senses, embraced his son and immediately fell in a swoon and became motionless. Then all the ladies who were assembled there with the exception of the wife of the lord of men (Kaikeyi) began to weep and Sumantra also went into a swoon and everything there became a babel of exclamations and cries.



CANTO XXXV.



ILD with rage which he could not calm, Samantra, grinding palm on palm, shook his head in quick impatience and sighed with woe which he could not brook. He gnashed his teeth and his eyes were red, From his changed face the colour had fled, In rage and grief that knew no law the charioteer saw the temper of King Dasaratha and with the swift and keen shafts of his words he shook as it were the bosom of Kaikeyi. With scorn as though its lightning stroke would blast her body, he spoke thus :—"Oh lady, since you have forsaken your husband King Dasaratha himself who is the lord of the whole world both movable and immovable, there is nothing in this

world from doing which you will hesitate. I will consider you as the murderess of your husband and ultimately of your family also, since by your acts you have distressed the King, invincible like the mighty Indra, firm as the immovable rock and imperturbable like the deep ocean. Do not despise your husband and lord King Dasaratha, the bestower of boons. To a woman, her husband's wish far exceeds even thousands of sons. Usually on the death of the King the sons succeed to the kingdom in the order of their age and this order you wish to violate in the case of the lord of the Ikshvaku race. Let your son become the King. Let Bharata rule the earth. We shall all go to that place to which Rama goes. No Brahmin would deign to live in a place belonging to you. Such a great offence you are now eager to commit. Beholding you commit such a dire sin, I wonder why the earth has not quickly yawned and swallowed thee. I wonder why the flaming and dreadful censure uttered by the great Brahminic sages does not destroy you who are bent on banishing Rama. Having cut down

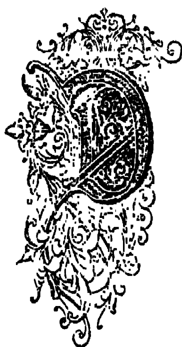
the mango-tree with an axe, however much we may water and otherwise attend on the margosa tree it will never become sweet. I consider you worthily born; like mother like daughter. 'Honey is never extracted from the margosa' so goes the saying in the world. We are well aware of the evil propensities of your mother and remember it just as we heard it in days long gone by. In days of yore some saint capable of granting boons bestowed on your father an excellent boon and in consequence of which your father, the lord of the earth, became capable of understanding the cries of all kinds of creatures. He thus came to know the language of all birds and beasts. Then one morning as he was lying on his couch he heard the chattering of a gorgeous bird and as he marked its close intent he laughed aloud in merriment. Then your mother. became angry and wishing for the noose of Death she told the King thus—'I am eager to know, Oh gentle one, the cause of your laughter.' The King replied to his lady thus:—'If I apprise you of the cause, Oh lady, surely my death would take place this

moment. There is no doubt about that.' Then your mother Oh lady, told your father Kekaya thus:—'Tell me the cause. I don't care whether you live or not. You are not to laugh at me.' Thus addressed by his spouse the lord of the earth, Kekaya, went to the saint who granted him this boon and told him everything in detail. Then that granter of the boon, the wise sage, thus replied to the King. 'Let her die or destroy herself, Oh King, you had better not yield to her.' On hearing these words of the saint the King, with a clear conscience, discarded your mother quickly and lived happily like Kubera. Likewise you also force the King to tread the path of the wicked. Out of folly you are committing this foul deed, Oh sinful one.

It now appears to me that the worldly saying that the sons inherit the qualities of their fathers and the girls those of their mothers is perfectly true and justified. You had better not be so. Accept the words spoken by the monarch. Follow your husband's will and become the hope and stay of the people. Urged by sinful folly do not

make your husband, the lord of men, equal in prowess to the King of the celestials, tread the path of unrighteousness. The faultless King, the illustrious Dasaratha of beautiful eyes will not render false the vows he has vouchsafed to you. Rama is the eldest, is highly respectable, bent on his duties, and carefully guarding his dharma. Let him be installed as the protector of the whole living world. Mighty will be the blame attaching to you that will spread all over the world if Rama goes to the forest abandoning his father the King. Let that Raghava rule the kingdom. Fling this fever from off thy breast. There is none in this best of towns except Rama who will put up with you. When Rama is installed as Yuvaraja the highly-powerful King Dasaratha will enter the forest in accordance with precedent." Thus did Sumantra with folded hands again and again address Kaikeyi in the midst of the royal assemblage with words soft and sharp in turn with a view to move her but that lady did not budge an inch nor did she grieve. There was not observed even a change in the colour of her face.

CANTO XXXVI.



ESCENDANT of Ikshvaku, the King Dasaratha, troubled much on account of his promise, spoke thus to Sumantra with tears and oft-repeated sighs of sharpest pain "Oh charioteer, you had better marshal quickly a perfect force equipped with all magnificence and consisting of the fourfold divisions namely, cars, elephants, horses and infantry, to follow Raghu's scion hence. Let the traders with all their riches and those who tell charming stories and dancing women fair of face grace the prince's ample chariot. On all the train who throng his courts and those who share his manly sports bestow great gifts and precious wealth and bid

them go with him. Let noble arms and many a wain as also townsmen swell the prince's train. Let also hunters, renowned for woodland skill, follow Kakutstha. While he slays elephant and deer, drinking wood honey as he strays and looks on streams each fairer yet, he may chance forget his Kingdom. Let all my stores of grain as well as wealth follow Rama who is to reside in the lonely forest. Performing sacrifices at all holy spots and dealing forth ample dakshinas as prescribed, let Rama live happily in the forest in company with saints. The mighty-armed Bharata will govern Ayodhya. Let the illustrious Rama on the other hand be furnished with all objects of enjoyment." As the offspring of Kakutstha spoke thus fear awoke in Kaikeyi's breast. Her countenance became faded and her utterance was choked. Sad and alarmed with bloodless cheek Kaikeyi turned to the King and scarce could speak. "My Bharata shall not rule an uninhabited waste bereft of all sweets to charm the taste—the wine cup's dregs, all dull and dead whence the light

foam and life are fled." While Kaikeyi, devoid of all sense of shame spoke thus cruelly, King Dasaratha answered her of expansive eyes. "Having put me to the yoke, Oh mischievous one, why do you now spur and goad me who am now struggling with the load. Why did you not oppose at first. Oh ignoble lady, this deed that is now commenced." Hearing these angry words of the King, that beautiful dame Kaikeyi got doubly furious and replied the King thus—"In this very line of yours Sagara drove forth in disgrace his eldest son called Asamanja. Thus should this son of yours go into exile." Thus addressed, the King Dasaratha said 'Fie on you,' and all the people present became afflicted with shame, but she never cared to understand them. Then the notable and aged and pure-spirited personage Siddhartha by name, held in high esteem by the monarch, addressed Kaikeyi thus. "Asamanja, the wicked, caught hold of the infants as they played on the road and threw them in the waters of the Sarayu and enjoyed the scene. Beholding this, all the townspeople became enraged

and represented to the King thus—'Oh Enhancer of the prosperity of the Kingdom, choose either of us, either Asamanja or us.' Then the King in reply asked them the cause of their fear. When asked by the King the subjects thus replied—'In folly, this one of perverted sense loves to lay fierce hands upon our children at play and throwing them into the river Sarayu he finds extreme delight in it.' Hearing those representations of his subjects the lord of men wishing to do good to them abandoned that son of his. The King commanded his servants thus—'Take him quickly in a vehicle along with his wife and dependants and banish him from the country till the end of his life.' He then wandered all over the dense forest with a spade and a basket roaming in all directions an outcast wretch as he was, defiled with crimes. The wisely virtuous King Sagara indeed abandoned his son under these circumstances. What sin did Rama commit that he should be banished like this. We do not find any bad qualities in Rama. It is indeed difficult to find any stain in him, pure as the moon.

Or else if, Oh lady, you find any kind of fault in Raghava tell it now in detail publicly. Let Rama be then banished. The abandonment of him who is absolutely stainless and who is ever intent to tread the righteous path would, because of the defiance of Dharma involved in it, destroy even the splendour of Indra. Therefore enough, Oh lady, of your hope to ruin Rama's bliss. Oh fair lady, you have also to protect yourself from the censure of the world." Hearing the words of Siddhartha the King in a very feeble voice told the grief-stricken Kaikeyi thus—"You do not relish this speech, Oh sinful lady, you know not what is good for me or for yourself. This act of yours, the result of your having taken a very narrow and wicked course is surely far from the path trodden by the good. I will go along with Rama to-day forsaking my kingdom, wealth and pleasures. You had better, in company with Bharata as King, enjoy the dominion at your sweet will for ever so long."



CANTO XXXVII.



NOBLE Siddhartha spoke thus and then Rama, bred in the laws of meek behaviour thus addressed Dasaratha humbly. "What have I to do with a retinue, Oh king—I who renounce everything and am going to live in the forest on woodland fare abandoning all enjoyments. He who gives away the best elephant and still sets his heart upon the tether, what is the use of his attachament to the chord when he abandons the noble elephant itself? Thus it is with me, Oh foremost of righteous ones. What is the use of an army to me, Oh Lord? I resign everything. Let the bark-dress alone be brought to me. Let a spade and a basket also be brought to me

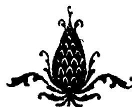
who am going to the forest to live there for fourteen years." Then Kaikeyi brought the bark-dress with her own hands and unblushingly asked Raghava, in the midst of the concourse of people, to wear it. That tiger among men, Rama received those two bark-dresses from Kaikeyi and after discarding the fine clothes he was wearing, he put on those hermit's clothes. Lakshamana also immediately threw off his beautiful clothes and took up the hermit's dress in the presence of his father. But Sita arrayed in silk garments threw trembling glances on the barks she had to wear and became afraid like a shy doe that eyes the snare. Ashamed and weeping for distress the fair and lovely Janaki eventually took the dress from Kaikeyi and with her eyes full of tears the virtuous Sita, ever intent on virtue, thus addressed her husband who looked like the lord of the Gandharvas. How do the hermits who dwell in the forests wear their bark-dresses? Saying this Sita, ill at ease, became embarassed again and again. Taking one of the barks in her hands she put it round her neck but the daughter of

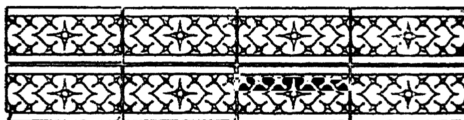
Janaka got perplexed and stood with a sad and appealing face. Then quickly hastening to her side, Rama, the pride of all who cherish virtue, himself tied the bark mantle on her over the silk raiment which she wore. Seeing Rama thus put the excellent bark-dress on Sita, the ladies of the harem shed copious tears and with an exceedingly sorrowful heart they told Rama bright with splendour—'Child, this tender lady was not directed to dwell in the forest. When in accordance with the words of your father you go to the lonely forest, let us cheer ourselves Oh lord, at least with a sight of her. In company with Lakshmana, you had better go to the forest Oh child, this lovely girl is not fit to live in the forest like a hermit. Grant us our prayer Oh son, let the fair Sita remain here, since, bound always by ties of virtue, you would not yourself consent to remain here.' Hearing those words of the ladies the son of Dasaratha tied the bark-dress on Sita of equally pure character. When the bark garments had been put on by her, the preceptor of the King, Vasishtha, beholding it, addressed these

words to Kaikeyi, repressing Sita's zeal—"Oh evil-hearted sinner, Oh shame of the royal race and name, Oh perverted wretch, you have cheated the King with vile deceit and you are going beyond the pale of truth. Sita shall not go to the forest as an exile, Oh you lost to all sense of character. She will stay here and occupy the seat naturally belonging to Rama. Those joined by wedlock's sweet control have but one self and common soul. This Sita shall rule the Kingdom as Rama's own self and soul or if Vaidehi still clings to Rama and goes to the forest along with him, we will also follow him and the whole of this town also shall go with us. The warders of the harem along with their wives shall also go wherever Raghava may go. The whole nation taking with it its stores of grain and wealth shall accompany Raghava. Bharata as well as Satrughna will also wear the bark-dress and stay in the forest with their elder brother, the foremost of the Kakutsthas. You of vile ways and ever bent on harming the people, may stay here alone and rule this Kingdom unpeopled, barren and desolate. The land over which Rama

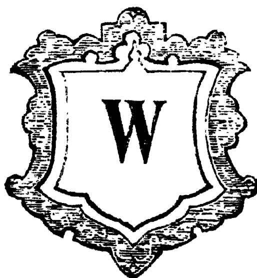
reigns not shall no more bear the name of Kingdom; the forest which Rama wanders through shall surely be our Kingdom. It does not behove Bharata to rule this earth which is not given to him by his father nor to stay by you as son if he is really born to this monarch, the lord of the earth. Even if you rise from this earth and fly to the skies he who knows the history of his forefathers would never do otherwise. Therefore although intent on advancing your son, you have really brought about his injury. In all the world none draws his breath who loves not Rama true to his death. This day, Oh Kaikeyi, you shall behold birds, deer and beasts and cows from lee and fold turn to the woods in Rama's train. Even the trees will stand with their heads turned towards him. Oh lady, give excellent ornaments to your daughter-in-law and remove this bark-dress. This bark mantle does not befit her." Thus saying Vasishtha dissuaded the wearing of that garment. "Oh daughter of the King of Kekayas, you chose to ask for the residence of Rama only in the forest. Let

Sita also live with Rama in the forest adorning herself daily with beautiful ornaments. Let the royal princess go to the forest surrounded by excellent vehicles and attendants and costly dresses and all other necessities. When you asked for the fulfillment of your boons you did not think of this— the departure of Sita." When that foremost of Brahmins, that preceptor of the King, possessed of unparallelled powers, spoke thus, Sita did not turn from her resolve to follow her husband and to do what is good to him.





CANTO XXXVIII.

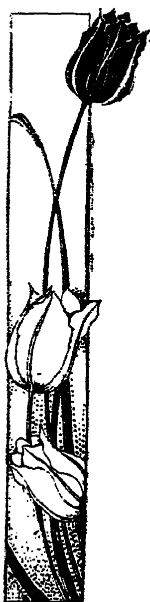


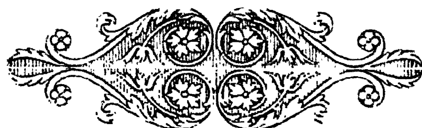
HEN Sita wore the bark garments and, though possessing a lord, appeared protectorless, the people in a body cried aloud 'Fie on you, Oh Dasaratha'. The King became highly distressed on hearing that loud cry and forsook all hopes of duty and fame. That descendant of Ikshvaku, heaving hard sighs, spoke to his wife thus "Oh Kaikeyi, it does not become Sita to go in this hermit dress of kusa and bark. She is tender and young and always fit to enjoy pleasures My preceptor spoke the truth when he said that

she is unfit to go to the forest. What injury has she done and to whom, that this poor girl, the daughter of the best of Kings, should in the midst of the public wear the bark garments and stand bewildered like some poor beggar? Let the daughter of Janaka dispense with the bark garments. It does not form part of the promise I made of old. Let the princess proceed to the forest in comfort taking with her all the treasures. The cruel promise was duly made by me who am unworthy of this life; you have indeed contrived this since your childhood and surely it will burn me out just as a bamboo is burned out by its own blossoms. Oh wicked woman, even granting that Rama has done something unfair to you, what harm has been done here either to you or to me by Vaidehi? With her eyes full and soft like the deer she is gentle, modest, true and mild. What injury will the daughter of Janaka do to you here? Is it not enough for you, Oh sinner, that Rama is to be banished? What for do you wish to commit more heinous sins by these deeds of yours? I heard you, Oh lady, repeat to Rama the

promise I made to you when he came here for the purpose of the installation. Now you are going beyond that and you will surely go to hell since you are eager to see Maithili also clothed in hermit's dress." Thus bewailed the noble King without seeing the end of his grief. On account of his extreme distress he fell on the ground immersed in sorrow on account of his son. When the father spoke thus, Rama who was ready to start to the forest told these words to him who was sitting with drooping head. "Oh just King, here stands my dear mother Kausalya who has earned a name by her virtues, who is aged and of noble character and who does not blame you, Oh lord, on any account. On account of my separation, Oh granter of boons, she has now reached the ocean of grief, she who did not till now experience any pain. Hence it behoves you to treat her gently and with kindness. Adored by you who are worthy of all honour she must be treated in such a way that she will not feel the grief on account of her son. Wrapt in constant thought of me she would indeed live for your sake, poor mother.

Oh peer of Mahendra I pray you to be kind to her and to treat my mother so very gently that when I dwell afar in the forest, she may not, emaciated with grief on my behalf, resign her life and pass on to the abode of Yama.





CANTO XXXIX.



N company with his wives the King heard the words of Rama and saw him dressed in the ascetic garb. He lost consciousness and consumed with grief, he could not look on Raghava and even if he looked on him the highly afflicted King could not talk anything. For about an hour the King was as it were lifeless and extremely distressed. The mighty armed one cried aloud thinking of Rama only. "I think I have in days of yore deprived several of their young ones or else I must have slain several creatures. Hence only this calamity has befallen me. Unless the time comes, life does not go from the body. Though tormented by Kaikeyi there is no

death for me who see my son standing before me bright as fire, wearing the hermit's dress having cast off his own fine garments. All the people are troubled and grieved on account of the deed of that one woman. Kaikeyi, having dared this deed of sin strives for herself to win the gain." He spoke these words, his eyes grew dim with tears, he cried once 'Ah Rama' and once only. Weak and fainting he could not speak further. Regaining consciousness in the course of an hour, that lord of the earth spoke thus to Sumantra:—"Yoking the royal car with excellent horses you had better come here and drive this exalted one beyond the limits of the state. This seems to me to be the fruit that virtues bear to the virtuous—the sending of the brave and the good to the forest by the father and the mother." Sumantra heard the words of the King and obeyed him quickly and energetically. He yoked the car and brought it to the palace gate with decked horses. Then to the monarch's son the charioteer sped and raising hands of reverence said that the light car which the gold made fair

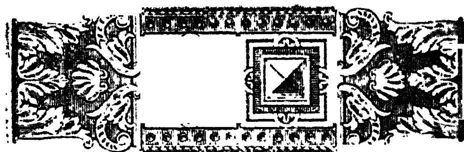
was standing there yoked with the best of steeds. The King summoned in haste the officer in charge of the treasury and told him, well skilled in place and time, his pure resolve. 'Bring here quickly for Vaidehi highly costly garments and precious ornaments of rare excellence, taking into account the number of years she has to live in the forest.' Ordered thus by the lord of men, he went to the treasure-house, brought the rich stores and gave them all to Sita immediately in his presence. Then Vaidehi of noble descent, ordered to the forest, adorned her limbs bearing traces of nobility with those lovely ornaments. So well adorned and so fair to view, she threw a glory throughout the hall, just as the lord of light flings his radiance over the sky when he dawns. Embracing her with both her hands, her mother-in-law told Maithili of noble behaviour after kissing her on her forehead. "In this world below faithless wives loved and cherished every day by their husbands, neglect their lords and disobey him when dark misfortune befalls him. This is the nature of women. After

enjoying long days of common bliss, when some slight misery happens, they abuse their husbands and even forsake them. Youthful wives are thankless, false in soul with roving hearts that spurn control, brooding on sin and quickly changed. In one minute their love is estranged. No glorious deed or lineage fair, no knowledge, gift or tender care can bind in chains of lasting love a woman's light and inconstant mind; but those good ladies who still maintain what right, truth, scripture and rule ordain, there is no holier or purer thing for them than their husbands. So take care not to neglect this son of mine who has been banished. Whether rich or poor let him be your god." Sita heard these words of Kausalya full of virtuous significance and with folded hands she replied to her mother-in-law face to face, "All will I do, forgetting naught, which you, Oh honoured mother, have taught. I know, have heard, and have stored deep in my heart the rules of duty to my lord. It does not behove you, Oh noble lady, to include me in the category of the faithless multitude. It is not possible for me to swerve from

virtue just as it is not possible for the light to depart from the Moon. The stringless lute gives forth no strain, the wheelless car does not move, similarly a woman without a husband enjoys no happiness though she may have one hundred sons. Limited is the gift of the father, limited is the gift of the mother and limited likewise is that of the son but unlimited being the gift of the husband, who will not honour him? I am thus well posted up in the pros and cons of virtue and have become an adept in it. How can I disregard my husband, Oh lady? Husbands are indeed the true gods for their wives." Hearing these pleasing words of Sita which went directly to her heart Kausalya, pure in heart, gave ready vent to her tears that sprang of joy and woe. Then with folded hands the highly virtuous Rama approached his mother who was specially honoured in the midst of his mothers and told her these words—"Oh mother, pray don't subject yourself to grief but look after my father. The period of residence in the forest will elapse very quickly The nine and five years of my exile will fly away for

you as if in sleep and when that is completed you will find me back here surrounded by my friends." Having thus spoken to his mother out of affection, he beheld all his other mothers three hundred and fifty in number. The son of Dasaratha, finding those mothers also similarly afflicted, folded his hands and told them these words fraught with virtue "If I have said anything harsh to you in consequence of familiarity or if I have done anything wrong out of ignorance, pray forgive me for the same and now adieu, I bid good bye to all of you." When all those ladies heard these words of Raghava full of nobility and virtue their minds were lost in grief. As Raghava spoke thus there arose a loud wail from the wives of the lord of men like the cries of the Kraunchi birds. The abode of Dasaratha which used of old to resound with the joyous notes of *muraja*, *panava*, *megha* and other such musical instuments now rang with the sound of high wailing, with the lamentation and the cry, the shriek, the choking sob and the sigh that told the ladies' woes.





CANTO XL.



HEN Rama and Sita and Lakshmana with folded hands approached the king and meekly went round him. After taking leave of him, the virtuous Raghava, in company with Sita, bowed before his mother, bewildered with grief. Following his brother, Lakshmana bowed to Kausalya and then again took hold of the feet of his mother Sumitra. As he was bowing, the weeping mother, desirous of his welfare, kissed him on the forehead and addressed the highly powerful Lakshmana thus:—

'You, who are well attached to your

friends, are now left free to dwell in the forest. Do not be careless, Oh son, towards your brother Rama in his wanderings. Afflicted or prosperous he is your sole refuge, Oh faultless one. This is the rule of the good in this world *viz.*, the younger brothers should be under the control of the elder. This is certainly the right line of conduct for you since it is the eternal rule in this family—gifts and vows during sacrifices and sparing not the body during battles. Know Rama to be Dasaratha, and know the daughter of Janaka to be myself. Consider the forest to be Ayodhya and with these thoughts, go forth, Oh child, in comfort." Thus addressing Lakshmana who was quite ready to follow his dear brother Rama Sumitra said again and again "Go, Go." Then Sumantra, well versed in etiquette, humbly addressed Kakutstha with folded hands just like Matali addressing Indra. "Be pleased to ascend the Car, Oh illustrious prince May good betide you. I shall take you quickly, Oh Rama, to the place directed by you. The fourteen years that you have to live in the forest have to commence from

this very day. Thus has the Queen urged you." After completing her toilet and adornments, Sita, the best of womankind, ascended, with a delighted heart, the car that shone bright as the Sun. Then the two brothers Rama and Lakshmana quickly sprang on the bright shining car adorned with gold. The father-in-law gave Sita who was following her husband sufficient clothes and ornaments, after taking count of the period of their residence in the forest Similarly there were placed on the floor of the car, a number of weapons, coats of mail for the brothers, a leather basket and a spade. Seeing that the two brothers with Sita as the third have ascended the car Sumantra urged on the horses of noble breed who matched the rushing wind in speed. When Rama started thus for a long residence in the dreary forest, chill numbing grief assailed the town, all strength grew weak and all spirit failed. There was wild tumultuous confusion throughout Ayodhya and a mighty uproar was caused by the mad and furious elephants and by the neighings of horses Then all the city,

young and old, wild with their sorrow uncontrolled, rushed after the car of Rama just as the panting herds, afflicted with the heat of the Sun, run to water. They eagerly clung to the sides of the car and to its back and with faces full of tears they addressed him in a highly plaintive voice. "Oh charioteer, restrain the reins of the horses; drive gently and slowly; we will once more gaze on Rama who could not be seen by us hereafter for many more days. Surely the heart of the mother of Rama is without doubt, made of steel, since it is not shattered by the sight of the departure of her godlike son Rama to the forest. Blessed is Vaidehi following her husband like a shadow. Attached to virtue she does not forsake him as the Sunlight forsakes not mount Meru. Blessed are you also, Oh Lakshmana, since you are serving your ever-truthful brother Rama of divine splendour. Noble indeed is this thy resolve and high is your prosperity. The fact that you follow him—this is certainly the road to heaven." Speaking thus, the people who followed their beloved prince, the joy of the Ikshvakus, were not

able to control their tears that rolled down in torrents.

Then the grief-stricken King, surrounded with his mournful wives came out of his abode saying "I shall see my dear son." He heard a mighty noise in front of him proceeding from the weeping women just like the noise made by she-elephants when a great male-elephant is taken captive. The father of Rama, the illustrious Kakutstha appeared then shorn of splendour just like the full moon at the time of its being eclipsed by the planet. At that time the illustrious and incomprehensible Rama, the son of Dasaratha urged his charioteer to drive the horses with greater speed. Rama said to the charioteer "Drive fast", the people said "stop." Thus urged in the way, the charioteer was not able to do both ways at once. When the highly powerful Rama went out, the dust of the roads raised by the wheels of the car was laid to rest by the torrents of tears that poured down from the weeping townspeople. Weak and pitiful with weeping tears, and senseless with the cries of "Alas, Alas," the whole town be-

came highly distressed at the departure of Rama. The tears caused by woe fell down from the eyes of females just like the rain-drops from the lotuses shaken by the disturbing movements of the fish. When he, the king of high renown, saw that one thought held all the town, he fell down in grief like a tree whose root has been cut away. Then there arose a mighty cry from behind Rama's car from the people who saw the King faint under the grief too great to bear. Some people cried "Alas Rama," others cried "Ah, Rama's mother." Thus all the people wept aloud along with the ladies of the Zenana.

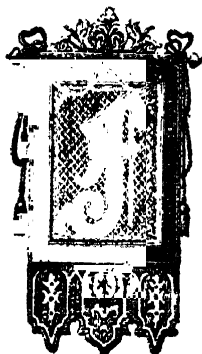
Then turning back, Rama saw that his sorrow-stricken and bewildered father, the King, along with his mother, was following his track. Bound by the bonds of *dharma* he could not well behold his mother just like a young calf bound by strings. As he cast one mournful look on his parents with their weary feet—parents who, used to bliss, should ride in cars and who should never be tried by sorrow— he urged on the charioteer to drive faster. As when the driver's torturing

hook goads on an elephant, the look of father and mother in despair was more than Rama's heart could bear. As the cows return to the stalls which hold the calves for whom they yearn, so to the car did the mother of Rama try to run. Several times did Rama look on his mother as with cries of woe she ran after the car with wild gestures resembling dancing and cried aloud "Ah Rama, Rama, Ah Sita, Ah Lakshmana" and shed copious tears on account of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita. The King cried aloud "Stop" and Rama said "On, on, speed away." Between these contradictory instructions Sumantra felt himself as between two wheels. Rama told Sumantra "If you are taken to task by the King you may tell him 'I did not hear you', but now drive on since a lengthened woe is bitterest pain." In obedience to the words of Rama, the charioteer dismissed the crowd that pressed towards him and urged on the horses which were already running fast. The King's attendants then turned back after going round Rama, but mentally and by the swift flow of their tears the people did not turn back. Then the ministers told that

mighty monarch Dasaratha thus—"He that is expected to return should not be followed far" With perspiring limbs and drooping mien, the King heard their exceedingly wise counsel and stopped short; Still on their son, the distressed King and Queen kept fast their lingering eyes.



CANTO XLI.

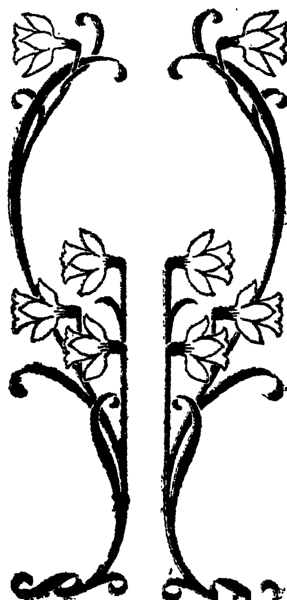


HOLDING their hands, the two tigers among men went out of the city and then there arose from the ladies' bower a mighty cry of distress. "Where goes he now, our lord, the sure protector of the friendless poor, in whom the wretched and the weak were wont to seek defence and aid? He turned aside all words of wrath and even when cursed never replied in ire. He shared his people's woe and stilled the troubled breast which rage had filled. Where goes that highly noble and effulgent one now, he who always looked on each of us as on his own mother Kausalya? Harassed by Kaikeyi, the King has ordered him to the forest. Where goes he now, he who is the protector of the whole

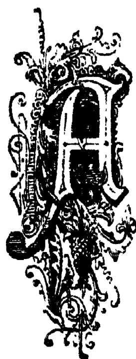
world and its peoples? Ah, senseless King, to drive away the hope of men, their guard and stay, to banish to the distant wood, Rama, the duteous, true and good!" Thus did the royal dames, like cows bereaved of their young calves, weep bitterly oppressed with grief and cry aloud. The Lord of Earth heard the terrible cry of distress proceeding from the Zenana and consumed by the grief for his dear son, he became mightily afflicted. The householders did not perform the *agnihotra* nor did they cook in their houses. The subjects did not perform any of their duties and meanwhile the Sun had set. The elephants flung their food aside and the cows denied milk to their thirsty calves. Mothers were not pleased at the sight of their first-born. *Trisanku Lohitanga*, *Brihaspati*, *Budha*, and all the planets approached the Moon and stood with fierce aspects. The lunar stars withheld their light and the planets were no longer bright and the *Visakhas* lit the air with their horrid glare. As the mighty ocean heaves and raves when tossed by the fury of the periodical Tempest, thus all

Ayodhya reeled when Rama went to the forest. All the Quarters were agitated as though surrounded by darkness. Neither did the planets nor the stars emit any light whatever. Chilling grief and dark despair fell suddenly on all men there. Their wonted pastime all forgot, nor thought of food or touched it not. And ceaselessly consumed by grief and breathing long drawn-out sighs, all the people in Ayodhya sympathised with the monarch of the world. Crowds in the royal street were seen with weeping eye and troubled mien: no more a people gay and clad, each head and heart was sick and sad. No more did the wind blow cool, no more was the Moon pleasant to see. The Sun did not glow and the whole world was plunged in woe. Sons, brothers, husbands and wives forgot the ties that bound them to each other and all of them thought of Rama only. Deprived of sense and oppressed by the burden of sorrow, the friends of Rama turned not to slumber or repose. Like Earth with all her mountains bereft of Purandara, Ayodhya, bereft of the noble Rama, was fiercely

troubled by fear and sorrow's force and shook with many a throe, while elephant, warrior and horse sent up the cry of woe.



CANTO XLII.



AS long as was seen afar the dust that marked the course of Rama's car, the glory of Ikshvaku's race did not turn away his eager face. As long as he beheld his dear and exceedingly virtuous son, so long he appeared to grow in size as it were on the ground eager after seeing his son. But when he could not view even the dust that marked the course of Rama, he fell down on the ground fainting and overcome with grief. Immediately the Queen Kausalya supported him on the right by taking hold of his right hand and Kaikeyi, the beloved of Bharata, came to the left side. The King, within whose ordered soul Justice and Virtue held control, turned to Kaikeyi and said with.

distressed senses—"Touch not my body, Oh Kaikeyi whose soul can plot all sin, touch me not. You are neither a loving wife nor a relation to me. Never again would I look on you. I will have nothing to do with your retinue nor they with me. You whose selfish heart seeks only worldly wealth and who have given up all virtue, as well as your hand which I held in wedlock and the steps that I took round the fire, all these I renounce both in this world and in the next. If Bharata too be glad at having obtained this vast Kingdom, let not the funeral offerings given by him reach me."

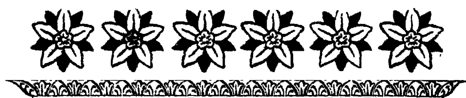
Then having raised that lord of men who was covered all over with dust, Queen Kausalya, stricken with grief, turned back. As one whose hand has touched the fire, or slain a Brahmin in his ire, he felt his heart torn with sorrow, still thinking of his forlorn son. Each step was a torture to him as each step showed the tracks of the chariot and care and anguish darkened him just as the eclipsed Sun grows dim. As he thought of his dear son again and again he became distraught by woe and cried

aloud. And when he learnt that the car conveying his son had sped beyond the city, he said thus—" I still behold the foot-prints made by the good horses that conveyed my son afar, but that noble Rama is not to be seen. Ah, my son, my first and best, who was wont to rest on pleasant couches, with limbs perfumed with sandal and fanned by many a fair beauty's tender hands, he will surely lie down to-day underneath some tree with a log or a stone as a pillow. Neglected and covered over with dust, he will rise up from the ground heaving long sighs, just like the husband elephant coming forth from the mountain sides. The dwellers of the forest will surely behold the long-armed hero, the lord of the world, roused from his bed, roam about in the forest like one helpless. That beloved daughter of Janaka, always used to all comforts will surely reach the forest to-day, worn and tired with the piercing thorns. Not accustomed to the forest, she will surely get frightened at the wild beasts' deep roaring there, whose voices lift the shuddering hair. Oh Kaikeyi, Glorify yourself in your having obtained

your desire. Enjoy the Kingdom as a widow. For bereft of that tiger among men, I do not care to live." Thus lamenting, the King, surrounded by crowds of people, entered the best of towns like one, newly bathed after the performance of the funeral ceremonies. Whichever side he turned, naught met his gaze but empty horses, courts and ways. The bazars and the temples were all closed. Countless feet no longer trod the royal street. All were thinking of Rama only and were weak, worn and woe-subdued. Beholding the city in such a plight, the King entered his abode just as the Sun sinks into the cloud. The royal residence, now bereft of Rama, Vaidehi and Lakshmana looked like a deep and unagitated pit from which the serpent has been borne away by Garuda, the king of birds. Then with choking sobs and voice half-spent, the King renewed his sad lament and with broken utterance faint and low, scarce could he speak these words of woe—"Lead me on quickly to the abode of Kausalya, the mother of Rama. In no other place will there be any relief for my heart." When he said

thus, the warders of the palace took him to the abode of Kausalya and laid him there meekly. Even after he entered the abode of Kausalya and rested himself on the couch, his mind was extremely agitated. The King beheld the palace bereft of his two sons and devoid of his daughter-in-law just like the sky without the Moon. And seeing it the noble and heroic monarch raised aloft his hands and in a loud voice cried out "Alas Raghava, you have forsaken me. Happy are those favoured people who shall live at that time and behold the return of Rama and embrace him on his return." Then came the night, whose hated gloom fell on him like the night of doom. At midnight Dasaratha spoke thus to Kausalya —"My sight which followed Rama has not yet returned. I do not see you Oh Kausalya. Touch me well with your hand." Then that Queen beheld the lord of men, lying on the bed with all his thoughts engrossed solely on Rama, sat by him and with a highly distressed heart, sighed hard and bewailed much.





CANTO XLIII.



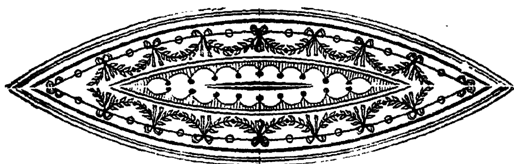
AREFULLY observing the monarch lying on the couch with grief, Kausalya, distressed on account of the separation from her son, spoke thus to the lord of the earth—" Having vented her venom upon Raghava, the tiger among men, Kaikeyi will now roam about like a she-serpent that is set free. Having obtained her desire by the banishment of Rama she will be all the more eager to frighten me still further here at home, just like a wicked serpent. If Rama had stayed here in the town begging his food from door to door or even if my son had been enslaved to do Kaikeyi's will, even

these would have been a boon highly preferable to his banishment. But Kaikeyi, in her free will, chose to hurl down Rama from his high estate just like the demon's portion of the oblations offered by the *Ahitagni* during the *parvas*. The mighty armed and heroic bowman with his gait resembling the king of elephants, surely enters the forest with his wife and with Lakshmana. Despatched by you to the woods at the command of Kaikeyi, to what plight will they, not inured to privations, be reduced in the forest? Bereft of ornaments these youngsters of tender years, banished at the ripe time of enjoyment, how would they meekly live in the forest with fruits and roots as their food? Oh, that my years of woe were passed and the glad hour were come at last, when I shall see here my dear children, Rama, with his wife and with Lakshmana! When will those two heroes return as from sleep and go back to Ayodhya and when will the famous Ayodhya, beholding the return from the forest of the two tigers among men, become wild with glee, decked with wreaths and uplifted

banners and dance with joy just like the ocean during the full moon? When will the strong-armed hero Rama drive through the city, placing Sita before him in the car, just like a mighty bull following the cow? When will thousands of people meet my sons in the royal roads and throw, in joyous welcome, fried grains on those two repressors of foes as they enter the town? When will I behold those two, resembling two mountains with their peaks, enter the town with lovely ear-rings and with their weapons and swords? When shall youthful bands of twice-born maidens, bearing in their hands fruits and flowers in goodly show, go circling round Ayodhya with gladdened hearts? With the ripened judgment of a sage and godlike in his blooming age, when shall my virtuous son return to cheer our hearts like timely rain? Undoubtedly, Oh hero, in a former life, I think I have most cruelly cut off the udders of the kine and left their thirsty calves to pine. On account of that sin, Oh tiger among men, I am now forcibly deprived by Kaikeyi of my son to whom I am so very fondly attached, just like

a cow being robbed of its calf by the lion. I do not care to live bereft of my only son who is endowed with all virtuous qualities and who is well-versed in all the sastras. There is no zest in life for me here when I do not see my beloved son, mighty armed and highly powerful. As in summer the divine sun burns this earth with his fierce rays, even so this raging fire of grief, caused by the separation from my son, consumes me."





CANTO XLIV.



AS the best of dames, Kausalya, was lamenting thus, Sumitra, ever abiding in virtue, spoke to her these words full of *dharma* :—" Your son, Oh noble lady, is graced with all virtues and stands foremost among men. Why then do you bewail thus or weep bitterly ? If the powerful Rama has hastened to the woods leaving the kingdom, it is for the purpose of making the words of his noble father good and true. Thus Rama clings to the path of virtue, the path to which the righteous cleave and which surely confers permanent welfare hereafter.

Such an excellent one should never be grieved for. And the faultless Lakshmana too, kind to all creatures, follows always the same noble course and this is certainly to the advantage of that noble soul. And Sita, who is worthy of all tender care and who knows well the hardships of forest-life, still follows your virtuous son. Virtuous, true and careful of his vow, your son has now unfurled the banner of his fame through all the world. What has he left to aim at now? Well-knowing the unequalled purity and greatness of Rama, the Sun is not likely to afflict him with the heat of his rays. Through the forest glades, a soft auspicious breeze shall spring for him and bring its tempered heat and cold to play around him at all times. The Moon, with its cool beams, shall delight the faultless hero during nights when he is lying down and shall soothe him with the soft caress of a fond parent's tenderness. Beholding the lord of asuras, the son of Timidhvaja slain in battle by the highly effulgent Rama, the God Brahma gave to him the divine *astras*. Such a hero, such a tiger among men, relying on the

strength of his own arms, will fearlessly dwell in the forest as in his own house. His stricken foemen fall and die whenever he lets his arrows fly; and is that prince of peerless worth too weak to keep and sway the earth? His sweet pure soul, his beauty's charm, his hero-heart and warlike arm will soon redeem his rightful reign when he comes again from the woods. He will be the sun of the sun, the fire of the fire and the lord of the lord; he will be the lustre of the lustrous, the fame of the famous and the patience of the forbearing; He is the God of the Gods and the foremost of all creatures. Whether in the kingdom or in the town what evil qualities could be found in him, Oh lady? That best of men, Rama, is sure to be installed in the kingdom along with these three *viz.*, the Earth, Vaidehi and the Goddess of fortune. He, seeing whose departure all the people of Ayodhya became distressed with overwhelming grief and shed heart-rending tears, the same irrepressible lord, as he went his way wearing kusa and bark-dress, was followed by Lakshmi in the guise of Sita. Hence

what is there that is unattainable by him? And what is there that is incapable of being attained by him when in front of him goes forth Lakshmana himself, the best of those that wield the bow, with his arrows, swords and *astras*? You shall surely see your son return again after completing the period of residence in the forest. Leave off thy grief and gloom, Oh lady, I am speaking to you the truth. You shall, Oh faultless and auspicious lady, see your son rise up like the moon and worship with his head both these feet of yours. You shall soon shed tears of joy on seeing your son re-enter the Kingdom and installed there in all glory. Do not grieve, Oh lady, do not lament. Evil cannot touch Rama. You shall soon see your son along with Sita and Lakshmana. Oh sinless one, It is for you now to console all these people. Why then, Oh revered lady, do you suffer your heart to be thus overpowered? It does not behove you to grieve. Oh lady, because Rama is your son and there is none else in this world besides Rama who sticks to the virtuous path. Beholding your son bow to you in the

company of his friends, you shall soon shed tears of joy just like the cloud during the rainy season. Your son, capable of granting all boons, shall soon re-enter Ayodhya and with his soft and tender hands press your feet. As the long chains of cloud pour their water when they see the hill, so shall the drops of rapture soon run from thy glad eyes to see your son returning, as he lowly bends to greet thee, surrounded by all his friends." Thus the fair and faultless lady Sumitra, skilled in uttering refreshing words, soothed and consoled the mother of Rama by her soft and varied words and then ceased talking. Hearing those words of the mother of Lakshmana, the grief of the mother of Rama and the wife of the lord of men immediately left her body just as the light autumnal cloud surcharged with slight rain.





CANTO XLV.



EARNING after the noble Rama, brave and true, the people followed him when he went to dwell in the forest. Even when the King in the midst of his friends was restrained from proceeding further, these people who followed the car of Rama did not turn back. For, they who dwelt in Ayodhya felt such fond affection for him, who, coupled with all grace and glories high, was the dear full moon of every eye. Though entreated much by his people, Kakutstha was firm in his resolve to make his father's words true and proceeded to the forest only. Deep in the hero's bosom sank their love, whose signs his glad eye

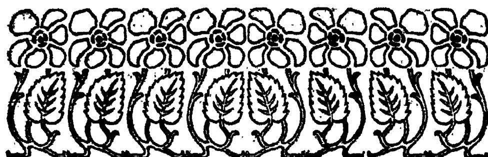
drank. He spoke in a loving tone to cheer them, as his own dear children. "Whatever love and regard are had for me by those who dwell in Ayodhya, let the same be transferred in greater measure to Bharata, in order that I may be pleased. For he of auspicious behaviour, the enhancer of the joy of Kaikeyi, will duly do whatever is good and pleasant to you. In judgment old, in years a child, with heroic virtues meek and mild, a fitting lord is he to cheer his people and remove their fear. Coupled with all royal qualities, and selected as the *yuvaraja*, he is by far greater than me. It behoves you to obey your master's commands. If you are eager to do what would be pleasing to me, it behoves you to act in such a way that the monarch may not grieve when I am gone to the forest." The more the son of Dasaratha adhered to the path of filial duty, the more the people longed for Rama as their lord. Rama, in company with the son of Sumitra, appeared as it were to bind more closely with the chords of his excellent qualities and draw towards him the townspeople who were all meek and filled with tears.

The saintly twice-born, triply old, in knowledge, age and energy, with hoary heads that shook, raised their voices and spoke aloud from a distance. "Oh steeds, best and noblest, who whirl Rama's car so swiftly, go not, but return and be to your master kind and true. Dumb creatures do indeed have ears to listen and especially so the horses. Therefore hearing our cries of entreaty you had better return. Pure by the observance of dharma, heroic and firm in keeping his noble vows, your lord should indeed be taken into the city and not away from it to the forest." As soon as he saw those aged twice-born men stand there lamenting in their misery, Rama got down in haste from the car and in company with Sita and Lakshmana, Rama, bound to the forest, went on foot to their side suiting his stride to that of those old people. He could not with pitying heart and tender eye, bear to pass in his chariot the twice born throng as weariedly they walked along. When they noticed the steps of Rama still pursuing his onward course, woe shook the troubled heart of each and burnt with grief, they

spoke thus :—"With thee, Oh Rama, to the wood all Brahmins go, as well as all Brahminhood. Borne on our aged shoulders see our fires of worship go with thee. Behold these bright umbrellas got from the Vajapeya sacrifices borne behind you like cloudlets in the autumn wind. With these umbrellas got from the Vajapeya sacrifice, we will give shade to you, now destitute of your own white umbrella, when you shall feel the heat of the solar rays. That intelligence of ours which always follows the Vedic mantras is now turned towards you, Oh child, and is ready to follow you to the forest. Deep in our aged bosoms lies the Vedic lore, the wealth we prize, just as our wives protected by their chaste and dutiful conduct live at home only. There is no necessity to make any fresh resolve, since our hearts are already well fixed to follow you. If you yourself neglect dharma, what dharma is there for us to eagerly expect? Oh noble prince, retrace thy way. Hear us, Oh Rama, as we lay, with many tears and many prayers, our aged heads and swan-white hairs low in the dust before thy feet. Full

many of these who now run with thee had just begun their sacrificial rites and their completion depends, Oh child, on thy return. All rooted life and things that move cherish deep affection to you, Oh Rama, and you are when, entreated by such devotion you had better show some favour. Tall towering trees deprived of motion since rooted fast to the earth and hence incapable of following you, are bewailing loudly in groans and sighs when the wild wind rushes by. The gay birds do no more flit through the air, but foodless and in a meloncholy mood, sit together on the trees and appeal to you whose kind heart feels for all." As the aged Brahmins wailed thus with wild lamentations with the object of turning him back, the river Tamasa seemed to help them by obstructing the course of Raghava. Then Sumantra freed from the car the weary steeds and groomed them with utmost heed. He bathed and dried their limbs and after making them drink water, he allowed them to roam at pleasure in the grassy mead not far from the Tamasa river.





CANTO XLVI.



RRIVED at the delightful banks of the Tamasa, Rama, the chief of Raghu's race, first looked on Sita and then spoke thus to Lakshmana, the son of Sumitra. "Since we started on our way to the forest, this is the first night that has descended on us. Joy to thee, Saumitri; do not grieve for our dear home and all we have left behind. Behold these empty forests weeping as it were all around us, as the beasts and birds that inhabit it retire to their respective abodes for rest. To-day the city of Ayodhya, the capital of my father's kingdom, with its men and

women, will surely grieve for us who have departed thence. For indeed, Oh best of men, by the numerous good qualities, the people are attached to the King, yourself and myself as also to Bharata and Satrughna. I feel deeply for our father and our illustrious mother, lest weeping for us bitterly, they blind their eyes with endless tears. Bharata is really very virtuous and he will surely console our father and my mother with words full of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kama*. When I consider over and over on Bharata's kind love, I do not grieve, Oh Lakshmana, for our father and mother. You have done the right thing, Oh tiger among men, in following me to the forest; else I should have sought elsewhere for help to guard Vaidehi. I will spend this night, Oh Saumitri, partaking of pure water only. This is just what I like though the forest provides varied store."

Having spoken thus to Lakshmana, Rama turned to Sumantra and addressed him thus:—"Be most diligent to-night, my friend, and tend the horses with due care." When the Sun had set, Sumantra fastened

the horses side by side, gave them plenty of grass and then returned. Having duly performed the auspicious evening *Sandhya*, they obeserved the shades of night falling around them. Then the charioteer, in company with Saumitri, prepared a bed for Rama. Seeing that bed made of the leaves of trees on the banks of the Tamasa, Rama, along with his wife and Saumitri, occupied it. When Lakshmana saw that his brother and his wife were sound asleep, he began to narrate in detail to the charioteer the various qualities of Rama. Even as the son of Sumitra, remaining awake the whole night, was engaged on the banks of the Tamasa in expatiating to the charioteer on the numerous virtues of Rama, the Sun arose. Thus near the shore of the river Tamasa, over which numerous herds of cows always wandered, Rama stayed that night along with the subjects. Rising up early in the morning, the highly effulgent Rama saw his subjects sleeping and told his brother Laskhmana of auspicious marks—"Behold now, Oh Lakshmana, these people reclining at the roots of trees, having resigned all thoughts

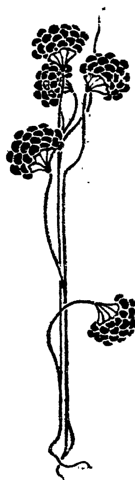
of their houses and caring for us only with all their heart and soul. The resolve that these townsmen have made to somehow turn us back is very firm and they would even give up their lives in their attempt and I am sure they would never give up their resolve. Come, while they sleep all unconscious, let us lightly get on our chariot and speed swiftly on our journey with naught to impede our progress. No more shall these inhabitants of the city of the Ikshvakus sleep underneath the trees following me still on account of their attachment to me. A prince should heal with tender care the self-brought woes which his people feel and should never let his subjects share the hardships he is forced to bear."

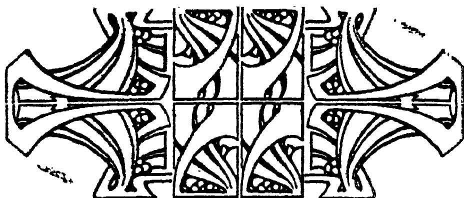
Lakshmana then replied thus to Rama who stood there as Virtue embodied—" Your suggestion commends itself very much to me, Oh wise brother. Speedily ascend the car." Then Rama asked Sumantra to yoke the horses to the car saying "I will go hence to the forest quickly, Oh lord." Then the charioteer, in all haste, yoked the horses to the chariot and with folded hands res-

pectfully informed Rama thus :—" Your car is ready yoked, Oh highly powerful hero, Oh bravest of the chariot-borne; May you be pleased to get into the same along with Sita and Lakshmana ; may good betide you." Climbing the car with all his equipments, the best of Raghu's race crossed the Tamasa, the rapidly rushing river abounding in eddies. Having crossed the river, the mighty-armed and illustrious Rama came upon a road both wide and clear of thorns and where even the timid need not fear for anything. In order to deceive the towns-people, Rama directed the charioteer thus—" Oh charioteer, seated in the chariot, drive northward. Speeding fast for about an hour in that direction, turn then the other way so that the citizens may not perceive the course followed. Pray attend to this carefully."

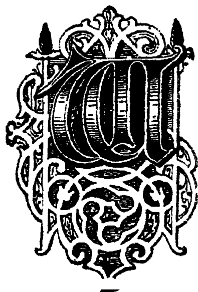
Hearing the words of Rama, the charioteer did accordingly. On his return he informed Rama that the car was ready. Then those two perpetrators of the race of Raghu, in company with Sita, seated themselves on the car that stood ready yoked and immediately the charioteer urged the horses to proceed

by the road that led to the penance-grove. Seated on the car along with the charioteer the son of Dasaratha, the mighty car-warrior, drove to the forest after first turning the head of the car towards the North on account of its producing all auspiciousness during the journey.





CANTO XLVII.



HEN night gave place to dawn of day, the towns-people rose up and not finding Rama by them, they became grief-stricken and motionless with bewildered senses. The woe-born tears were running fast as they cast their eyes all around and looked highly distressed, but they could not find a single trace of Rama. Bereft of Rama good and wise, with drooping cheer and weeping eyes, the woe-distracted sages gave went to their sorrow by means of wild laments. "Woe to the sleep that stole our senses with its beguiling influence,

that now we look in vain for Rama of the broad chest and stalwart limb. How could the strong-armed hero adopt this deceitful course and go out to the forest abandoning all his devoted followers? How can he, who used to cherish us always as a fond father the children born of his womb, how can the pride of Raghu's race abandon us and resort to the forest? Here let us all prepare for death or start on the last Great Journey. Nor that we are bereft of Rama, what is the use of life for us? There are huge trunks of dry wood to be got here in plenty. Lighting the funeral pyre with them we shall all enter the fire. What shall we speak? How can we say that we followed on his way the highly powerful Rama who speaks sweetly and who thinks no wrong. Surely the forlorn city of Ayodhya with its women, children and aged people, when it beholds us return without Raghava, will be plunged in deep sorrow and hopeless misery. We came forth with that peerless chief who was always self-controlled and how shall we now dare to look back on that town without him?"

Complaining thus with varied cry they tossed on high their aged arms and they cried aloud with sad hearts wrung with grief just like cows when deprived of their calves. A while they followed on the road which showed traces of his chariot but when at length those traces failed, a deep despair assailed their hearts. When they discerned no more the chariot marks, these hopeless sages turned backward saying "Ah, what is this? What shall we do? We have been foiled by Fate." Then with distressed hearts they took the path by which they came and reached Ayodhya, the city whose good people were one and all oppressed with grief. With troubled spirits quite cast down, they looked upon the royal town, and from their eyes oppressed with woe their tears again began to flow. Bereft of Rama this city did not look beautiful just like a dull river or lake robbed of every snake by Garuda. Dark and dismal as the moonless sky or as a sea whose bed is dry, so sad and dead to every pleasure was the town they beheld in great distress. Deprived of their senses by grief,

they entered their wealthy mansions with great difficulty and on account of the loss of all cheer in their hearts they could not distinguish between their own kinsmen and others though they looked at them minutely.



CANTO XLVIII.



HE citizens that followed Rama returned thus grief-stricken, highly distressed, with tears flooding their eyes, and sorrowfully panting for death. It appeared that life had already gone out of those hearts which were filled with piercing sorrow. Each came to his respective house and surrounded by their wives and children they shed copious tears which spread in torrents over their cheeks. They did not rejoice, they did not make merry; the trader did not exhibit his wares, the shops were not lively and the householders did not cook; none rejoiced on the recovery of lost treasure or on the attaining of immense wealth. Scarce the youthful mother smiled to see her first, her

new-born child. In every house the woman wailed and assailed her returning lord with keen taunting words that pierced like the steel the elephants. "Of what use to them are their houses, wives, wealth, sons or pleasures, whose eyes do no more look on Rama? Lakshmana is the only man of real worth, he who with Sita, follows Rama of the lineage of Kakutstha and serves him in the forest. Those pools and lakes and streams are made holy for all time to come, in whose pure waters Kakutstha shall bathe. Each forest, dark with lovely trees, shall yearn to please Kakutstha; each mountain peak and woody hill, each mighty flood and mazy rill, each rocky height and shady grove where Rama rove, cannot but gladly welcome their honoured guest with the best of all they have. The trees that bear clustering blossoms and bright-hued buds shall delight the heart of Rama and cheer him on the breezy height. For him the upland slopes will show the choicest flowers and fruits that grow and fling before him all their wealth even before the due season. The crystal water shall flow for him from

each hill and the floods of the mountain-streams shall be displayed in many a thousand cascade. The trees on the tops of the hills shall surely delight Rama. Where Rama stands, there is no fear, no danger comes if he be near. For he is indeed a hero, highly powerful and is the son of Dasaratha. Let us all follow him before he goes a long distance away. Even the shadow of the feet of such a noble master would surely bring us happiness. He is the Lord of all these people, he is our main-stay and he is our sole refuge. We shall attend on Sita and you had better serve Rama." Thus did the women of the town address, with grief-stricken hearts, their respective husbands. "Rama shall be your guard and guide in the forest and Sita shall similarly provide for us, the members of the weaker sex. For, who would care to linger here, where all is sad and dark and drear? Who would hope for bliss amid the mourners in a poor soulless town like this? If this kingdom belongs to Kaikeyi, it will be devoid of virtues and will become protectorless. Of what avail then to us is life itself, not

to speak of sons and wealth. If she, seduced by the lust of power, could cast away her lord and son, whom else would she spare, the base defiler of her royal race? We swear by our children that so long as Kaikeyi is alive we, living, will never remain in her kingdom though maintained by her. Who can live happily under that unrighteous, wicked and cruel wretch who has sent into exile the son of our lord and monarch? Bowed down by her oppressive hand all the land will become helpless and lordless, and swift destruction will seize everything because of her. Now that Rama has been exiled, the Emperor will not surely live long and when Dasaratha is dead, ruin will doubtless follow fast. Therefore you, who are now in dire difficulties with all your merits lost, had better either drink poison or share Rama's lot or disappear into oblivion and be not heard of. Nothing but a false pretence drove Rama, Sita and Lakshmana hence and we have been left to Bharata like cattle in the shambles. With his countenance resembling the full moon, and with his dark complexion, with his hands

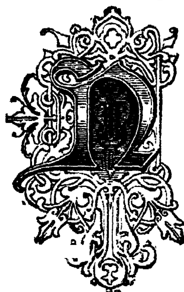
reaching the knees and with his lotus eyes, Rama, the repressor of foes and the elder brother of Lakshmana is the first to speak always. Sweet voiced and truth-speaking, the highly powerful Rama is lovely to behold like the moon and is beloved of the whole world. Surely that tiger among men whose prowess resembles that of a rutted elephant will grace the forests as the mighty warrior wanders there." While they were lamenting thus in the city, the countrywomen, consumed with grief, cried aloud just as people stricken with panic at the approach of death. While in each house the women bewailed thus on account of Rama the Sun set and night advanced. The fires of sacrifice were all cold, no text was hummed, no edifying tales were told, and the shades of midnight gloom came down enveloping the mournful town. With perfect stillness in the bazaar streets, with all joy gone and with no support, the town of Ayodhya looked gloomy like the sky without the stars. Still, sick at heart and with senses lost, the women shed tears for Rama as for their own son or brother exiled, for

Rama was indeed loved more than their own children. The town of Ayodhya where the feast, music, song and dance had ceased, as also all merriment and glee and where every merchant's store was closed, resembled now the mighty ocean with all its waters dried up.





CANTO XLIX.

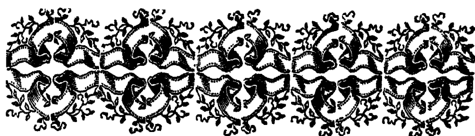


OW Rama, also, the best of men, keeping in mind his father's commands, had sped over many a league of road ere the night was passed, and as he sped his onward course the morn dispelled the shades of night. Performing the auspicious morning *sandhya*, he surveyed the country all around. Observing the villages with ploughed fields on their skirts and the forests with numerous flowers, he proceeded in fact very fast with the help of those excellent horses, though he appeared to go slow. As Rama proceeded along he heard the peasants living in those villages speaking to each other thus.—"Fie on King Dasaratha who has yielded himself

up to love's control. Fie on the cruel and sinful Kaikeyi ever bent on evil deeds; malicious and fierce she has passed all bounds of right and virtue and has sent to the forest as an exile such a highly wise and tender-hearted son of the monarch who had controlled the senses. How will that exalted lady, Sita, the joy of King Janaka, ever accustomed to pleasures, experience the hardships of the forest. Alas! King Dasaratha is affectionless, since he has abandoned his son, the faultless Rama, beloved of his subjects." Hearing these words of the peasants who lived in the villages by the way, the lord of Kosala, the hero Rama, quickly left Kosala behind him. Then crossing the auspicious floods of the river Vedasruti, Rama went in the direction of the quarter in which sage Agastya resided. Still he sped on for many an hour and crossed the stream—the herd-frequented Gomati—whose cooling tide rolls onward till she meets the sea. Borne by his rapid horses he reached that river's further shore and then crossed the Syandika which resounded with the screams of

peacocks and swans. Then as he journeyed on the road Rama showed to Vaidehi the populous land which Manu of old gave to King Ikshvaku. The glorious prince, the lord of men, frequently addressed the charioteer as "Oh, Suta" and with a swan-like voice loud and clear told him thus:— "When shall I return again and roam about sporting in the floral woods on the banks of the Sarayu in conjunction with my father and mother? In this world, hunting in the forest is the recreation ordained for the sage-like kings, and has been always followed in season by the descendants of Manu and is ever eagerly coveted by bowmen. I do not desire to indulge too much in hunting in the forests of the Sarayu but this is an unequalled recreation in this world approved for the royal saints." Thus speeding on without rest or stay, Ikshvaku's son pursued his way. Oft his sweet voice broke the silence and spoke thus to the charioteer on varied themes.





CANTO L.



ASSING through the extensive and lovely Kosala, the elder brother of Lakshmana, turned towards Ayodhya and with folded hands uttered these words. "Farewell, Oh best of cities, protected by Kakutstha. I address you as well as the gods who dwell in your temples and guard you. Freeing the lord of the earth from the debt of his promise, I will return from my residence in the forest and see you again in company with my father and mother." With blood-red eyes on accout of grief, he raised on high his right arm and while hot tears bedewed his cheeks he meekly addressed the people from the (Kosala)

countryside. "You have shown due compassion and regret for me. To grieve long is not good. You had better therefore depart to look after your interests." The people bowed before the noble Rama, circled round hin and then with bitter wailing, they hesitatingly departed, each his own way, While the people wept thus aloud unsatisfied, Rama sped beyond their sight just like the Sun disappearing at nightfall. Then the tiger among men passed beyond, in his car, the delightful city of the Kosalas, where grain and riches bless the land and people give with a liberal hand: A lovely realm unvexed by fear, where countless shrines and sacrificial posts appear, where mango-groves and gardens grow and streams of pleasant water flow, where dwells content a well-fed race and countless kine grace the meadows, and where, filled with the voice of praise and prayer each hamlet is worth a monarch's care. The bravest of the brave, Rama, went right across the middle of the prosperous and smiling country full of lovely villas and gardens, and fit to be enjoyed by the fore-

most of kings. Then Raghava saw the three-pathed, divine, Ganga, whose waters were cool and lovely and free from moss, and frequented by great Rishis, whose sacred banks were adorned with the graceful asramas of saintly sages, in whose deep waters sport the apsaras joyously during the season, lively with devas, danavas, gandharvas and kinnaras and frequented always by the beautiful wives of Nagas and Ghandarvas, with hundreds of sporting grounds for the celestials and hundreds of lovely gardens, coursing in the heavens for the sake of the gods, illustrious and full of divine lotuses, with its fierce roaring caused by the dashing of the waters, smiling as it were with its pure white foam, with its waters twisted like braid in some places, while in others circling beautifully in eddies, sometimes still and deep, sometimes rushing furiously, in some places sounding solemnly and at others roaring dreadfully, with a host of gods bathing in its waters and lovely with the pure lotuses, with enjoyable sandy beaches in some places and pure pebbles at others, always resounding with the sweet

tones of swans, and peacocks, and *chakravakas* and other wild birds, lovely in some places with rows of trees grown on the banks, and covered with blossomed lilies at other places, dense with innumerable lotuses in some places and with multitudes of white water-lilies at others, bright with the buds and wild as it were on account of the intoxicating pollen from the different kinds of flowers, the remover of all sorts of dirt, and pure as a gem in appearance, the forests on whose banks often resound with the terrific noises made by the elephants of the quarters, the wild and rutted elephants, the best of their species and worthy vehicles of the gods, resembling a damsel adorned carefully with excellent gems, surrounded by fruits, flowers, and shoots, as also by bushes and birds and frequented by porpoises, crocodiles and serpents, flowing from the feet of Vishnu, divine, sinless and destroyer of all sins—the Ganga which fell from the matted locks of god Sankara because of the power of the penance of Sagara, which is the consort of the Ocean, and which is resonant with the noises of *sarasas* and *kraunchas*. Rama reached

this Ganga on his way to Sringaverapura. The mighty warrior saw the surging eddies of the river and told the charioteer Sumantra thus :—" We shall stay here to-day. Not far from this river there grows a lofty Ingudi tree with numerous flowers and shoots. There we shall rest today, Oh charioteer. We shall behold the best of rivers, whose waters are worthy of all honour and which is sacred alike to all—gods, asuras, gandharvas, beasts, birds and men. Saying "very well" to Raghava, Lakshmana and Sumantra went with the horses to the Ingudi tree. Reaching the lovely tree, the Joy of the Ikshvakus, Rama, got down from the car along with his wife and Lakshmana. Sumantra also got down from the car, unyoked the horses and approached, with folded hands, Rama who was standing beneath the tree.

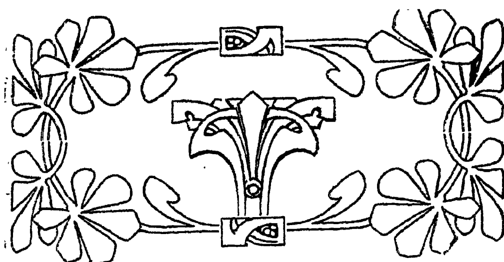
In that region there lived a certain King by name Guha who was a very dear friend of Rama. He was of the Nishada caste, highly powerful and renowned as a sovereign. When he heard of the arrival of that tiger among men, Rama, he approached him

surrounded by his elderly ministers and relations. Beholding at a distance the approach of the lord of Nishadas, Rama, along with Lakshmana, ran to meet Guha. He, distressed at the sight, embraced Rama well and said—"O Rama, This kingdom is your own just like Ayodhya. So let me know what I shall do for you. Who else, Oh mighty armed hero, will ever see a guest so dear as you to me." Then he brought various dainty fares of every flavour, rich and rare and quickly fetching the arghya, addressed Rama thus:—"Welcome, Oh mighty hero, all these lands entirely belong to thee. You are the lord here and we are your servants. Well may you rule our kingdom. Here are placed before you sweets foods, drinks and nectars. Here are soft beds for you and here the fodder for the horses." When Guha spoke thus, Rama replied:—"We have been in all ways highly honoured and pleased by your arrival here on foot and by this exhibition of your friendship." Then clasping him tightly with his shapely hands he said:—"Fortunately do I see you, Oh Guha, well in health along with

your relations. Is everything well with your dominions, friends and wealth? But all these that you have provided with friendly affection, I regret I have to decline, though I appreciate them. Know me now to be an ascetic roaming in the woods, following the path of a hermit, wearing grass, bark and hide and subsisting on fruits and roots. A little fodder for the horses is all I need and and nothing else. By this alone I shall consider myself as duly honoured. These horses are very dear to my father, the king Dasaratha and by these kind attentions paid to the horses I shall be highly honoured and pleased." Then Guha immediately ordered his men on the spot to quickly fetch food and drink for the horses. Then wearing the bark-dress, Rama performed the evening *sandhya* and took simple water brought by Lakshmana himself. When Rama with his wife went to bed, Lakshmana washed his feet and then seated himself under the tree. And Guha also, with bow in hand, sat near and conversed with Lakshmana and the charioteer and attentively kept faithful watch over Rama throughout the night. As the

illustrious son of Dasaratha, of lofty soul and rare wisdom, who had never experienced troubles and whose life had always been one of bliss, lay there thus, the long night passed away pleasantly.





CANTO LI.



AS Lakshmana still held his vigil impelled by unaffected love, Guha, who was distressed at the sight of him, addressed him thus:—'Beloved youth, this pleasant bed is spread for your sake only. Retire in it as you please and refresh yourself well. My men are all accustomed to hardships whereas you are used to pleasures only. For the sake of protecting Kakutstha we shall all be awake. In the whole of this world there

breathes none dearer to me than Rama. These words I speak to you truly and by truth I swear to you. I hope to attain high renown in this world through his grace as also extensive *dharma* and pure *artha*. Hence in company with my relations, I will guard, bow in hand, my dear friend Rama who is lying down here along with Sita, from all dangers. To me who often roam in these forests, there is nothing unknown. We will oppose even a mighty army composed of the fourfold forces." Lakshmana then told him thus—"We have all no fear whatever here when you stand as our guardian—you who are faultless and who perceive always only the right. How can it be possible for me to sleep when Rama is lying down on the ground along with Sita? How can I care for my life or for any pleasures? He whom even all the gods and asuras find it impossible to vanquish in battle, behold him now lying happily with Sita on the grass. He who was obtained after immense trouble by means of hard penance and Vedic mantras, the only dear and worthy son of Dasaratha, with suitable marks, when he goes out as an

exile, the King will not live long. The Earth will surely be widowed soon. Having wept full and loud, the women have now ceased on account of fatigue. The King's palace is now, I think, still, without any cares of anguish. Kausalya, the King, and my mother as well, I am not sure if they would all live through this night. Perchance my mother may live for the sake of Satrughna but Kausalya, the mother of the hero, must sink beneath the chilling grief. That town, full of people devoted to Rama, the world's delight, so rich and fair, will share the King's grief and perish. How will the life of that noble King remain in the body without seeing his eldest, and beloved and noble son. When the King dies, then Kausalya also will surely pass away and then my mother also will perish. The past is past; without obtaining his desire, without entrusting the kingdom to Rama, my father will perish. Happy are they who, at the time of the death of my father, the King, are able to perform well the funeral ceremonies. They will happily wander about in the capital of my father, lovely with its

quadrangular courtyards and well-laid highways, with its lordly edifices and palatial residences, graced with excellent courtezans, abounding in cars, horses and elephants and resounding with the notes of musical trumpets—the abode of all auspiciousness, filled with joyous and rich people, having gardens and villas and celebrating popular festivals. Ah! Will Dasaratha live till we return after dwelling in the forest? Will we be able to see that noble soul of firm vows on our return? When these years of evils are past, may we, with joy at last, turn to Ayodhya and enter the city in company with him who keeps his promise well." While the noble prince Lakshmana was lamenting thus distressed with grief the night passed away. When the son of the foremost of men, intent on the welfare of his subjects spoke thus truly, Guha became afflicted with sorrow on account of his strong affection to Rama and suffering from fever shed tears just like an elephant suffering from pain.



CANTO LII.



IGHT gave place to dawn of day and the illustrious Rama of expansive chest spoke thus to Lakshmana of auspicious marks, the son of Sumitra.—"This is the time of Sunrise, Oh, child, the glorious night has passed. The beautiful dark-winged *koil* has commenced to warble. The sounds of peacocks are heard as they cry in the forests. May we betimes cross the swift-flowing Ganges that flows into the sea." Hearing Rama's words, Saumitri, the joy of his friends, called Guha and the charioteer and stood in front of his brother. Guha heard the words of Rama and understanding

their import, he quickly called the chief carpenter and told his ministers there. "Fetch here quickly a boat, swift, strong and fair with rudder, oars and men." On hearing the commands of their king, the ministers of Guha made ready a lovely boat and informed Guha of it. Then with folded hands Guha told Rama—"Oh lord, the boat is come; what else shall I do for you? Oh you renowned as the son of a celestial, here is the boat ready for you, Oh foremost of men, to cross the river that flows into the sea. May you get into it, Oh you of excellent vows." Then the highly effulgent Rama spoke thus to Guha—"I am quite gratified with your attentions. Let everything be got into the boat quickly." Then donning on their coats of mail and fixing the bows and swords, the two Raghavas, in company with Sita, descended the slopes of the Ganges. Then the charioteer humbly approached the virtuous Rama and said—"What shall I do now." Then Rama touched Sumantra with his right hand and said—"Oh Sumantra, go back quickly and attend on the king with watchful care. Turn back. Thus far is enough

for me. Leaving the car we shall hence proceed on foot to the great forest." Finding himself thus dispensed with, the charioteer Sumantra, grieved at heart, spoke thus to that tiger among men, the descendant of Ikshvaku. "None has surpassed this in this world, your living in the forest like an ordinary individual with your wife and brother. I think no good has resulted from your *Brahmacharya*, or study or tenderness or straightforwardness, since woe like this afflicts you. Oh Raghava, living in the forest with Vaidehi and your brother, you shall, Oh hero, attain a glorious state as though you have conquered all the three worlds—We are indeed lost, Oh Rama, for, deceived by you, we shall become subject to Kaikeyi's control and shall partake of the evils of that sinner." Saying thus to him whom he considered as equal to himself, Sumantra the charioteer then saw Rama gone very far and distressed with grief wept for a long while. Then when his tears were dried and the charioteer had purified himself with water, Rama told him again and again these sweet words. "I do not find any

friend of the Ikshvakus equal to you. You had better behave in such a way that king Dasaratha may never grieve for me. The lord of the world is old, with his heart grief-stricken, and is worn and weak with love's burden. Hence I tell you this. Whatever that noble Emperor might command to please his beloved Kaikeyi's heart, let that be done unhesitatingly. Act in such a way, Oh Sumantra, that the great King may not become false or be consumed with grief. On my behalf you had better bow to the king who has never experienced any pain and who is old and noble, with subdued senses and repeat to him these words of mine:— "Myself or Lakshmana or Maithili do not grieve that we are banished from Ayodhya or that we dwell in the forest. When the fourteen years of our exile are quickly passed, you shall behold Lakshmana, Sita and myself return speedily. Having spoken thus to the King, Oh Sumantra tell my mother and the other ladies together with Kaikeyi again and again that we are doing well. Convey to my mother Kausalya from myself, Sita and the noble Lakshmana, our

salutations at her sacred feet. Tell the Emperor also as follows—'Fetch Bharata quickly and when he is arrived Bharata should be set on the royal throne. When you have embraced Bharata and installed him as Yuvaraja your aged heart will cease to ache with bitter pangs for our sake.' Say to Bharata also thus—'The way in which you behave towards the King, observe the same behaviour towards all the mothers without any distinction. As Kaikeyi is to you so is especially Sumitra; Similarly also especially my mother Queen Kausalya. Eager to act according to the will of your father who chooses you to fill the throne of Yuvaraja, you will be able to attain eternal happiness both in this world and in the next." When he was thus turned back by Rama, Sumantra became grief-stricken, heard all that Rama said and out of affection replied to Kakutstha. "Should deep feeling mar in any way my speech prompted by fond devotion, pray forgive whatever I wildly speak. My love is strong, my tongue is weak. Deprived of you how shall I return to that town, where the people are sick at

heart on account of your exile as though they are distressed with the pangs of separation from their sons. Having then seen my car with Rama the people will rend asunder that city with their cries of woe when they see the car now without Rama. Woe will be theirs too deep to brook when they look on the empty car alone with its charioteer returning home as when from hosts whose chiefs are slain. Though you are now far distant from them, the subjects are keeping you always in front of their minds and thinking of you ever and anon they have surely not partaken of any food to-day. You yourself witnessed, Oh Rama, how the subjects were distressed and overwhelmed with grief on your account when you were being banished to the woods. The great despair and the shriek of woe which they uttered when they saw you depart will be multiplied a hundredfold when they see me alone with the car. And what shall I say? Shall I say to the Queen—'I have taken your son to his maternal uncle's house. So do not grieve.' I cannot frame so false a tale. Yet how can I speak the unpleasant

truth and thus grieve the lady? How shall these excellent horses whom none but myself could control and who used to carry your relations and friends, how shall they now look on the car without you? Therefore it is not possible for me, Oh faultless one, to go back to Ayodhya without you. It behoves you to permit me to follow you to reside in the forest.

If these entreaties of mine cannot move your heart, if you still quit me and depart, then the flames shall end my car and me, deserted thus and reft of thee. Whatever obstacles to penance happen to you in the forest, I shall, Oh Raghava, with the help of this car, destroy their power. The pleasures of driving the car were obtained by me not by your indulgence; I now long to enjoy the pleasures of the forest life by your favour. Be pleased. I wish to stay in the forest by your side. I wish you would tell me affechionately "Be by my side." These horses also, if they serve you who dwell in the forest, will surely attain the highest bliss. Living in the forest I shall serve you with head and heart.

I shall gladly renounce Ayodhya or even the celestial regions. It is not possible for me to enter that Ayodhya without you just as it is not possible for sinners to enter the capital of Mahendra. This is my desire that when the period of exile is over I should take you again into this City in this car itself. The fourteen years in the forest in your company will pass away in no time. Otherwise it will become hundredfold. Do not, kind lord, leave me, your servant, who whould cleave to his master's son and pursue the same path with him, devoted, tender, just and true." When poor Sumantra entreated him thus again and again in various ways, Rama, who always sympathised with his servants spoke thus to him. "Oh faithful servant, I know very well how true and attached you are to me. Listen now to the reason why I send you from here to the City. When my younger mother Kaikeyi sees your return to the town, she will be convinced that Rama has gone to the woods. Pleased at my having gone to the forest, that lady will not doubt the virtuous King as a liar.

The foremost of my cares is this that my younger mother may obtain her son's kingdom prosperous and protected on all sides by Bharata. So for the sake of myself and the monarch, you had better go to the town along with the car, and communicate as desired what I have said to the respective personages." Thus spoke the prince and strove hard to cheer the heart of the charioteer. Then the manly Rama turned to Guha and spoke these wise words. "It is not proper on my part, Oh Guha, to live now in a forest inhabited by men. I must necessarily reside in a hermitage and mould my life in accordance with those rules. I shall now gladly take up the vows that form the adornments of hermits and thereby bring about the welfare of my father as also of Sita and Lakshmana. I shall braid my hair into matted locks and then go to the forest. Bring me the juice of the fig-tree." Then Guha brought immediately the said juice for the prince and Rama prepared the matted locks both for himself and for Lakshmana. And the long-armed tiger among men then wore the hermit braid.

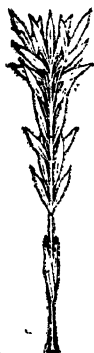
Then the two brothers Rama and Lakshmana, with their bark-dresses and matted braids, shone bright like Rishis. Treading the path of the Vaikhanasas, Rama along with Lakshmana followed the vows of that life and spoke to his helpmate Guha thus—"Do you, Oh Guha, vigilantly protect the army, the exchequer, the forts and the provinces, for, the sovereign's task—to watch and guard—is supremely hard." Then taking leave of Guha, the Joy of the Ikshvakus went calmly and quickly with his wife and Lakshmana. Finding the boat ready on the river-shore, the Joy of the Ikshvakus, eager to cross the swift-flowing Ganga, told Lakshmana thus—" You had better ascend gently, Oh tiger among men, the boat that stays here and next to you make the noble Sita get into it by extending a helping hand to her." Hearing his brother's commands, Lakshmana, in furtherance of it, got Maithili first into the boat and then embarked himself. Then the highly effulgent elder brother of Lakshmana himself ascended the boat and immediately the Lord of the Nishadas,

Guha, urged his kinsfolk. Having got on board the boat, the exceedingly puissant Raghava, recited the prayers fit to be recited by both the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, in order to secure all blessing. Then sipping the water as laid down in the scriptures, he, in company with Sita and Lakshmana of unequalled glory, bowed to that river with a delighted heart. Taking leave of Sumantra and also of Guha and his forces, Rama seated himself in the boat and urged the sailors to proceed. Then, impelled by swift and vigorous arms, the vessel held her onward course, and guided by the helmsmen, she flew through the dashing waves of Ganga. When she reached the middle of the river Bhagirathi, the faultless Vaidehi, folded her hands reverently and addresssd the river thus :—" May this son of the great Emperor Dasaratha, protected by your care, fulfil his prudent father's royal will. When he has spent in the forest the fourteen years of banishment with his dear brother and with me, he shall return again to his home. Then Oh fair lady, as we return safe I will pay you my offerings, dear Ganga who can bestow

all blessed gifts. You course through all the three worlds, Oh lady, and in the course of your wanderings you have seen the Brahmaloka. You are the consort of the Lord of the Ocean and you stroll here in this world gloriously. To thee, fair queen, my head shall bend, to thee shall hymns of praise ascend, when the tiger among men shall safely return and obtain his kingdom. To win thy grace I shall give to the Brahmins a hundred thousand kine and precious robes and finest meals. A thousand jars of wine shall flow when I return to my city. Having bathed pure I shall sacrifice with these and with flesh, corn and rice. Each hallowed spot, each holy shrine, that stands on these fair shores of thine, each fane and altar on thy banks shall share my offerings and thanks. Oh blameless lady, may he the blameless and strong-armed return to Ayodhya from the forest with me and Lakshmana free from harm." Thus conversing with Ganga, the faultless Sita, whose heart was right and true. speedily reached the Southern shore. Reaching the shore that best of men, the repressor of foes left the boat and stood

on the shore along with his brother and Vaidehi. Then the strong-armed Rama addressed thus the enhancer of the joy of Sumitra. "Be thine alike to guard and aid in peopled spot or in lonely shade. In lonely dense forests we must necessarily guard her. You had better go first, Oh son of Sumitra, and let Sita follow you. I shall go behind you both protecting both Sita and yourself. We have to mutually protect each other, Oh best of men. Vaidehi, who has not till now met with any arduous toil, shall today experience the hardships of a forest life. Today her tender feet must tread the rough rocky wilds where people do not crowd and where no gardens grow." Hearing the words of Rama, Lakshmana started first, and then Sita and behind her Raghava, the joy of the Raghus. When Rama speedily reached the other shore of the Ganga, Sumantra stretched his eyes and beheld him as far as he could, but when owing to the hinderances in the way he could no longer see him, he turned back his eyes and helplessly shed tears being overcome with grief. Having crossed the mighty river, the noble Rama,

the bestower of boons and the equal in prowess to a *lokapala*, than entered the flourishing and smiling *Vatsas* crowned with goodly crops. They slew there the four big beasts viz *Varaha*, *Risya*, *Prishata Maharuru*, took their pure flesh and feeling hungry went in time to the shelter of a tree for halting thereunder.





CANTO LIII



AMA, the best of those that captivate others, reached that tree, performed the evening *sandhya*, and spoke to Lakshmana thus.—"This is the first night that sees us outside the inhabited tracts and without the company of Sumantra. Yet do not be uneasy on that score. From this night forwards we have to keep a very diligent vigil, Oh Lakshmana, for the welfare of Sita depends on us: We shal

somehow pass this night, Oh Saumitri; spreading on the ground the leaves fetched by ourselves we shall anyhow lie on them." Saying thus, Rama, who is worthy of costly couches, sat on the ground, conversed with Lakshmana rehearsing many a pleasant tale. "Oh Lakshmana, it is certain that the Emperor will hardly sleep today. Kaikeyi should now be content with her desires fulfilled. She yearns so fiercely for the Empire that when she sees Bharata return home, she in her greed, may even bring destruction on our lord, the King. What can he do, old and reft of all aid and deprived of me, his soul enslaved by love and controlled by Kaikeyi. As thus I muse upon his woe and the confusion of his senses, I think *kama* is of greater might than *dharma* and *artha*. Oh Lakshmana, what man is there, unlearned though he be, who, for the sake of a female, would forsake his own obedient and loving son just as my father has done me? Bharata, the son of Kaikeyi, will alone with his wife enjoy the throne and blissfully maintain his rule over happy Kosala's domain. Now that our

father has grown old and I am staying in the forest he shall, all alone, enjoy happily the whole of the kingdom. He who renounces *artha* and *dharma* and follows the path of *kama*, he speedily gets into trouble like King Dasaratha; I think, Oh lovely Lakshmana, that Kaikeyi is born in this world just with three purposes, *viz.*, to make an end of Dasaratha, to send me into exile and to get the kingdom for Bharata. Ah me! I fear that borne away by the frenzy of her success, Kaikeyi may harass considerably Kausalya and Sumitra just for paining me. Queen Sumitra should never on my account experience pain. Oh Lakshmana, you had better go from here to Ayodhya in the morning. I shall all alone go with Sita to Dandaka. You shall become the protector of the helpless Kausalya. Kaikeyi is surely very mean-minded and will stoop to do many a base and unrighteous deed. She may even kill my mother when the virtuous Bharata rules. Surely, in some former births mothers were deprived of their children by my mother and hence only. Oh son of Sumitra, this has come to pass. Having been long nourished and tended with

all pain and care, now in the hour when her labours ought to bear fruit I have left her. Ah, fie on me. May no woman, Oh Lakshmana, give birth to a son like myself since I cause endless grief to my mother. I consider the *Sarika*, Oh Lakshmana, to be more affectionate than myself, since she is heard to say—" Parrot, bite the foot of the foe." Reft of her son, in childless woe, my mother's tears for ever flow: Ill fated and doomed to strive with fate what aid can she derive from me? Deprived of me, my mother Kausalya is most unfortunate. Pressed down by care she cannot rise from sorrow's flood wherein she lies. When I am enraged, Oh Lakshmana, I can, unaided and all alone guard with my arrows the whole of Ayodhya—nay even the whole of this Earth. But the display of prowess for no reason whatever is not proper. Afraid of doing wrong and of what would await me in the next world, Oh faultless Lakshmana, I have not now installed myself in the kingdom."

Thus mourning in that lonely forest, Rama bewailed his lot and with eyes full of tears

he sat there silent in the dead of night. Then Lakshmana consoled Rama who was exhausted with lamentation like fire whose flames are spent or like the ocean whose waves have lost their fury. "Certain it is, Oh Rama, the best of warriors, that since your departure thence, the town of Ayodhya will be now shorn of its splendour just like the night deprived of the moon. There is no use Rama, in your grieving now like this. You are simply causing sorrow to Sita and to myself, Oh best of men. Neither Sita, nor myself, Oh Raghava, will be able to live even for one hour if we are deprived of you just as the fish taken out of water. Deprived of you, Oh repressor of foes, I do not wish to visit either my father or Satrughna, or Sumitra or even heaven." Then sitting there at ease, their glances fell on the well-laid-out beds not far from them under the banyan tree and both the lovers of virtue resorted to them. Hearing those excellent and appropriate words of Lakshmana, Rama, the subduer of foes, long accustomed to *dharma*, took kindly to forest life for the full period of years. Then in that lonely

forest those two highly powerful heroes, the perpetuaters of the race of Raghava, never experienced any fear, just like lions roaming on the slopes of mountains.

